Tuesday 7 January 2025

Amateur Photographer

Double vision

The weird and wonderful world of collectable **binocular cameras**

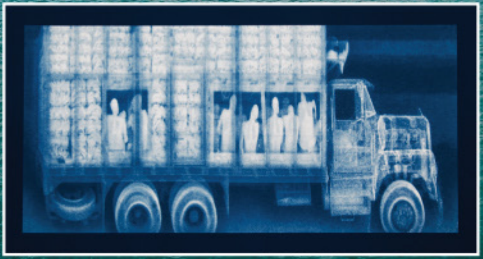
Passionate about photography since 1884

Every cloud...

Tips from the winners of **Weather Photographer of the Year**

Cowboys of the Americas

A five-year journey from Canada to Argentina



X-ray vision

Noelle Mason's cyanotypes of cross-border security imaging

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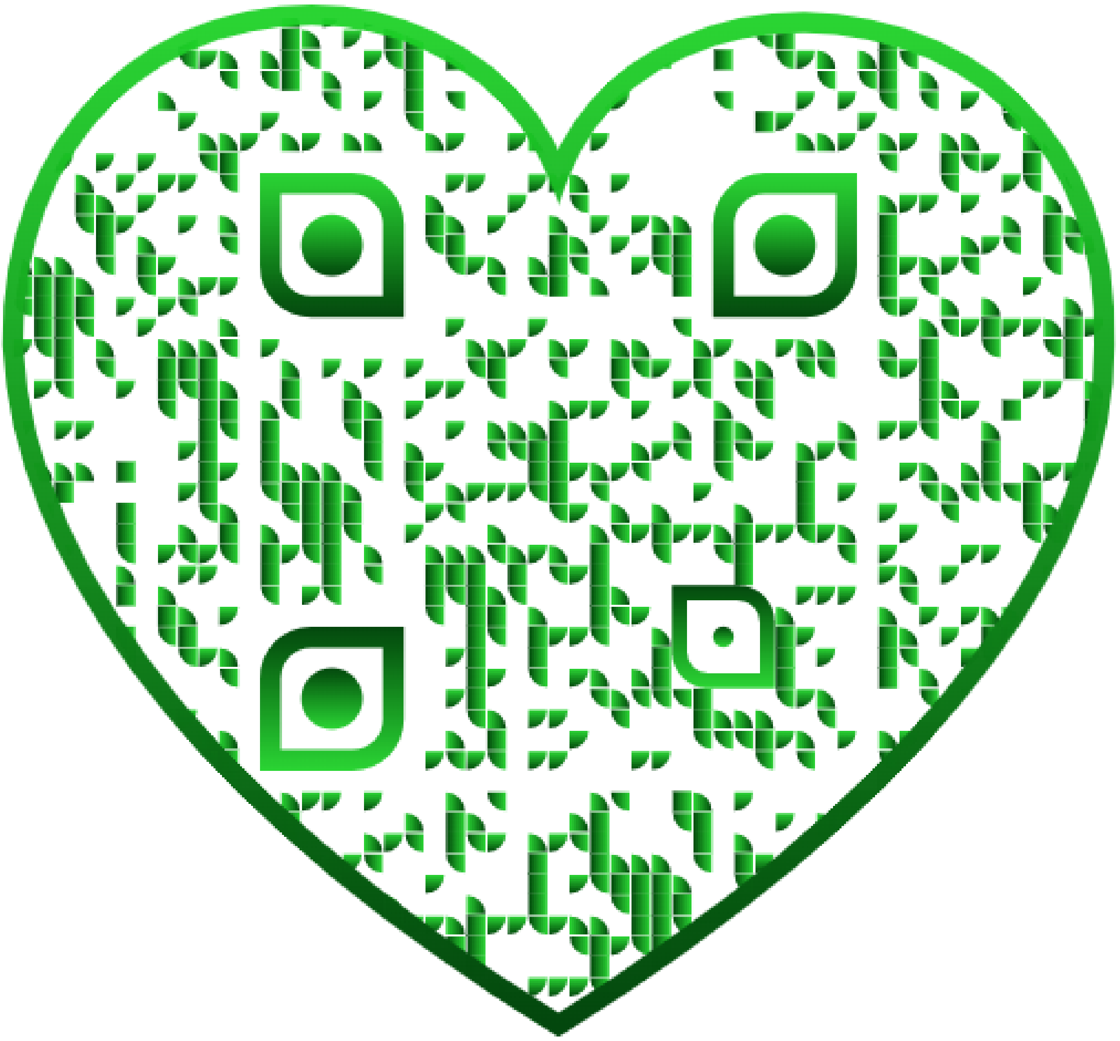
Test: Honor Magic V3: the world's slimmest and lightest vertical folding phone



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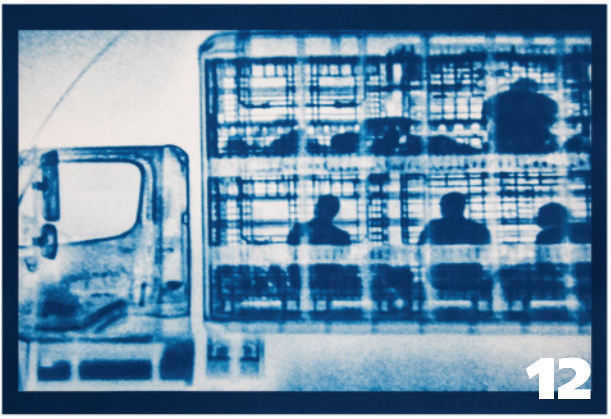

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

HOLLIE LATHAM HUCKER
Technique Editor

Hollie speaks to winners of Weather POTY, who share their tips

GEOFF HARRIS
Deputy Editor

Geoff interviews pro photographer Anouk Krantz about her project on cowboy culture

AMY DAVIES
Features Editor

Amy brings us a feature by Noelle Mason who creates cyanotypes of surveillance imaging

JOHN WADE

AP's expert on vintage cameras and photo history looks at the weird world of binocular cameras

NIGEL ATHERTON
Editor

Nigel tests Honor's Magic V3, a vertically folding phone with a tablet-sized screen

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

In *Accessories*, AP's resident chief reviewer tests some impressive photography gloves

Welcome

What a varied menu of delights we have for you this week! We lead with the winners of the Weather Photographer of the Year contest, which proves once again that there is no such thing as bad weather when it comes to photography. We feature a photographer making cyanotypes with x-ray images taken on the US/Mexico border, and talk to another who has spent five years photographing cowboy culture across North and South America. Our classic cameras expert John Wade peers into the strange world of binocular cameras and we test the camera on the latest foldable phone from Honor. If you don't already, may I suggest that you kick off the new year by taking out a subscription to AP and saving yourself some time and money? Details are on page 49.

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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COVER PICTURE © JAMIE RUSSELL/WEATHER PHOTOGRAPHER OFTHE YEAR. INSET: © NOELLE MASON

Our cover image is by Jamie Russell, who took 3rd Place Main Title, in Weather POTY. See his and other winners' tips in our feature on page 36

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Panasonic updates two Lumix cameras

PANASONIC has unveiled the Lumix TZ99 'travel zoom' compact and the Lumix G97, a budget Micro Four Thirds hybrid camera.

The TZ99 is a light update of the Panasonic Lumix TZ95/D, and comes with the same 30x optical zoom Leica DC lens (24-720mm equivalent), offering an aperture range of f/3.3-6.4. It also has the same 20.3MP 1/2.3-inch BSI CMOS sensor but now ships with a USB Type-C connection. There is no electronic viewfinder, however. With the same lens and sensor as the TZ95, it's going to work best in bright, sunny conditions, but with a 30x optical zoom lens it still offers something smartphones can't yet match.

The G97 is another fairly light update, this time of the Lumix G90 models, and again features a 20.3MP Micro Four Thirds sensor and 5-stop, 5-axis image stabilisation. The main changes are a higher resolution (1,840k-dot) fully articulating rear LCD and the addition of USB-C battery charging. There's also a new button for sending images to smartphones, plus upgraded video features. These include 4K video recording at 30fps (without limit) and 4x Full HD slow motion video at 120fps. There are also dedicated headphone and microphone jacks for vloggers.

The Lumix TZ99 compact will be available from February for £469, in black or silver, while the Lumix G97 is also available from February for £699 body only. It's also being sold with a 12-60mm lens for £799, or a 14-140mm kit lens for £899.

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The Panasonic Lumix G97

Comedy moments

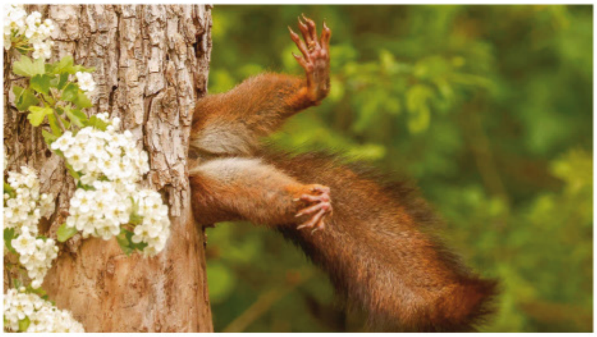
AN AMUSING shot of a stuck squirrel by Italian photographer Milko Marchetti has been named winner of the Nikon Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards 2024. Milko's image beat 9,000 other entries, the highest number in the awards' ten-year history. 'The competition was as fierce as ever, with only a few points separating the top five entries,' revealed the organisers. 'However Milko's photograph emerged as a clear favourite among the judges.'

Milko's prize includes a safari in the Maasai Mara, Kenya, with Alex Walker's Serian safari camps; a trophy made by Wonder Workshop in Tanzania; and a Think Tank photography bag.

There were nine other category winners, with Kingston Tam from Australia taking the Nikon Young Photographer Award for a charming close-up picture of a frog smiling at the camera. Meanwhile Sarthak Ranganadhan triumphed in the Nikon Junior Category with a shot of smooching owlets.

The competition is donating 10% of its profits to the Whitley Fund for Nature, which supports conservation leaders working in their home countries across the global South.

For more information on the winners, and more details about the 2025 leg of the Nikon Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards, see www.comedywildlifephoto.com



© MILKO MARCHETTI

'Stuck Squirrel': Nikon Comedy Wildlife Overall Winner 2024

© BETTINA VASS/IWPOTY.COM

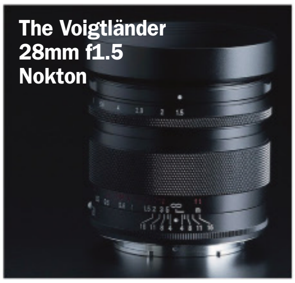
A chilled-out wedding

IN MORE competition news, Bettina Vass from Iceland has been named overall winner of the 8th International Wedding Photographer of the Year Awards for this spectacular capture. It shows the couple, Mauli and Christian, inside Katla ice cave in Iceland. 'To reach it, you must embark on a hike and descent led by a trained glacier guide,' recalls Bettina. 'My career from kindergarten teacher to wedding photographer has been just five years, but… this award is the Iceland on the cake!' Bettina gets $6,500 in cash and prizes, puns notwithstanding. See the full list of winners at iwpoty.com

More fast Voigtländer lenses

COSINA has released the Voigtländer 28mm f1.5 Nokton Aspherical for Sony E mount. This fast manual focus lens has 10 elements in 8 groups, along with a 12-blade iris diaphragm for attractive bokeh, minimum focusing distance of 0.28m and all-metal lens barrel. It's on sale now at £769.

Also released is Voigtländer's 90mm f2 VM Apo- Ultron lens for Leica M mount. This apochromatic lens reduces axial chromatic aberration to close to zero, claim the makers, while Abnormal Partial Dispersion glass is used in 6 out of 8 elements for high optical performance. It's only 63.3mm long, and on sale now for £749. See www.robertwhite.co.uk



The Voigtländer 28mm f1.5 Nokton

Nikon Z9 firmware update

NIKON has released new firmware (version 5.10) for its flagship mirrorless camera, the Z9. Aimed at pro movie makers, the updates include a new shutter mode, allowing the user to set the shutter angle to one of 15 steps between 5.6° and 360°. This eliminates the need to select a shutter speed whenever the frame rate is adjusted. Z9 users can now change the colour of the zebra pattern display, too, as well as customise the size, transparency and position of key displays such as the histogram and wave-form monitor. See bit.ly/z9newfirmware

Nikon Z9: updates for movie makers

Viewpoint
Geoff Harris

Deputy Editor Geoff takes issue with heated claims that AI is about to 'kill photography'

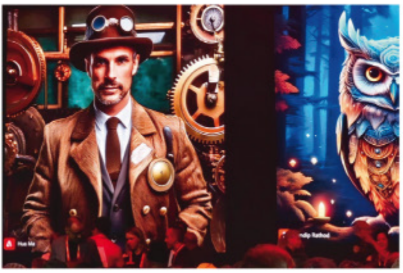
We are a diverse bunch here at AP and don't always agree on everything. Indeed, debate should be encouraged in photography. As Mao said, 'let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend' (not that editor Nigel should be compared to a communist dictator!)

So I am pushing back against the more wild-eyed claims in recent articles on AI, particularly John Bridges' lament that 'Generative AI "photography" will be the death of photography as we know it' (AP 31 December) and Jon Stapley's call to boycott Adobe (bit.ly/adobeopinion).

If a dystopian AI future is looming, nobody seems to have told the camera firms. Leica has just recorded the best-ever results in its history, while I don't see the Japanese makers issuing profit warnings as AI-generated photo-realistic imagery means we no longer need to buy a camera or lens. I'd argue easy phone photography continues to have a much bigger impact on the livelihoods of photographers...

Returning to specifics, John B seems to be accusing Adobe when he claims generative AI 'doesn't want to tell you *where* the information came from in the first place.' It's a rather bald statement.

When I put similar accusations to Adobe, it replied: 'Firefly [the firm's generative AI technology] is trained on a dataset of licensed content, such as Adobe Stock, and public domain content where copyright has expired. We do not train and have never trained Firefly on user content… We only train Firefly on content where we have permission to do so.' So while Adobe's T&Cs haven't always been clear, they are clearer now. Yes, the Ansel Adams estate complained about AI-generated images in his style appearing in the Adobe Stock library, but lessons have been learned.


© GEOFF HARRIS

Recent Generative AI examples – unlikely to put photographers of owls and steampunks out of business

We're all doomed! Really?

Private Frazer-esque AI doom-mongers don't take into account that a lot of generative AI is aimed at people who want to create quick illustrations, rather than to bankrupt photographers. Then there are the 'Content Credentials' initiatives being pushed by Adobe and big media firms, such as the BBC. This should make it easier for people looking at an image online to see how much AI was used. You can scoff, but it's a start.

I am not being complacent here, but can see a future where AI co-exists with conventional photography. 'Made without AI' could become a big selling point for photographers – just as many of us choose food free of artificial ingredients. And AI is also being used in lots of different ways, not just to generate pictures (many of which, I agree, look either naff or unconvincing). Lots of photographers are employing AI to reduce time spent on photo-editing chores so they can use it for more interesting things – like taking photos.

As seasoned AP contributor Will Cheung FRPS observes: 'The real win with generative removal in Photoshop (especially) and Lightroom is the ability to recover and repair images. Being able to remove distractions is really powerful, and while I could do it manually, life is too short.'

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the email address on page 3 and win a year's digital subscription to AP.

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Portrait of Humanity – Volume 6

£25, Bluecoat Press, 320 pages, Softback, ISBN: 9781908457882

The latest edition of this heartwarming award shows off the best of contemporary portrait photography, says **Amy Davies**

Now in its sixth edition, the annual competition run by the *British Journal of Photography* (BJP) is as superb as ever.

This year for the first time, the book is produced by Bluecoat Press, which is now part of the same group as the BJP. That means that it won't look the same as the others on your shelf if you've been collecting them, but I love the new design.

The edition now lies flat when you open the pages, making it a great experience when you're reading at a table and want to really spend time looking at the photographs. It also means that nothing gets lost in a pesky crease, either.

As for the photos themselves, there are 199 portraits to devour here. If you're interested in contemporary, there are few better examples out there to get your teeth into. *The Portrait of Humanity* – unlike the *Portrait of Britain* – features portraits from all across the globe. While I enjoy the British edition, I always find the *Humanity* version to be just that little bit more fascinating.

Each portrait is accompanied by a short passage telling us more about the subject, something which is always appreciated – although a picture should transcend written descriptions, I'm always keen to find out more whenever possible.

There are too many highlights to pick out from the book, and besides which my favourites change every time I pick it up – which is what I love most about it. I'll be coming back to this many times over the next year to have another look, and see what else stands out to me.

At £25, you get a lot of portrait photography for your money, and I'd recommend it for that reason alone. I'm already excited to see what the next instalment brings.

The Portrait of Humanity book features images from across the globe, including the following:

Far left: Tatyana by Kirstine Fryd, Denmark

Left: Untitled from the series This Universe, by Juan Brenner, Guatemala

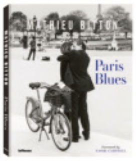
Above: 01.12.23 - In every photo, in every detail, in every pixel by Petra Kroon, Netherlands

Below: Opal Onyx, The Puppeteer by Rose Hartley, Australia

Dave Chapelle, February 6, 2018

Paris Blues by Mathieu Bitton

£59.95, teNeues, hardcover, 240 pages, ISBN: 9783961716685



It's no surprise that there have been many, many books about Paris. One of the world's most photogenic cities, there's something to photograph around every corner.

In this volume, Leica Ambassador Mathieu Bitton shares pictures from everyday life in the French capital, as well as special moments of Parisian high society.

Paris was the childhood home of the photographer, and continues to be a source of inspiration for his artistic work today. His photographs display an authenticity and intimacy that outsiders would likely find difficult to replicate.

Despite some strict publishing and privacy laws, Paris remains a haven for street photographers (particularly for those who reside outside of France). There are some great examples of the characters you'll likely find wandering the streets – plus a sausage dog, who could ask for more?

If you're looking for a new book about Paris to add to your collection, this one would certainly come well recommended.

July 16, 2018

Left: From the series M-E, 2020

Right: From the series Ametsuchi, 2012

Both images © Rinko Kawauchi

Rinko Kawauchi: At The Edge of the Everyday World

Until 16 February. Arnolfini, Bristol. Free

The acclaimed Japanese photographer Rinko Kawauchi returns to the UK for her first major exhibition since 2006.

Revolving around the series 'M/E', letters which stand for 'Mother', 'Earth' as well as 'Me', the photographs aim to explore the fragile beauty of the natural world, alongside the gentle rhythm of domestic scenes in order to discover the connections between the two.

M/E began in 2019, and includes images from Icelandic volcanos and ice floes, as well as Hokkaido's snowy landscapes, plus everyday home life during the Covid pandemic.

Also on display at the exhibition is work from other series including Illuminance, Ametsuchi and AILI. During her career, Kawauchi has had more than 30 photobooks published, and these will be on show too.

Entry to this exhibition is free, and the Arnolfini's space is beautiful, so if you're able to get along to Bristol to see it, it's well worth a visit. Launched back in October as part of the Bristol Photo Festival, the show has been on for a while, but you've still got a bit of time left to see it.

A new publication has been created to accompany the exhibition, which can be picked up at the gallery's brilliant bookshop.

Far left: Playground by Sebastian Piórek

Left: Impala shadows by Solly Levi

National Geographic World From Above by Jeffrey Kerby

£40, National Geographic Society, hardback, 368 pages, ISBN: 9781426223402

WORLD FROM ABOVE
JEFFREY KERBY

Featuring some of the world's best photographers, over 200 stunning images take us on a journey from above.

Look down at the colourful roofs of European cities, see the intricate patchwork of American cornfields, and trace the surprising silhouettes of tropical islands. And it's all thanks to the photographers who followed one simple maxim – point the lens down.

The book is split into four sections, exploring how images from above use colour, shape, texture and scale to fantastic effect. What's more, included are in-depth interviews with some of the photographers where we can learn more about how they climbed, flew, dug or even rocketed into space to capture their shots.

There are also explainers on how we, as humans, have always experimented with the top-down perspective, all the way from ancient earthworks to modern drones.

It's been curated by the internationally acclaimed nature photographer and *National Geographic* explorer Jeffrey Kerby, so unsurprisingly pretty much every page is an absolute delight.

If you like travel and nature, there are very few books which can better something like this. A wonderful twist on a favourite genre, this is a volume to be treasured.

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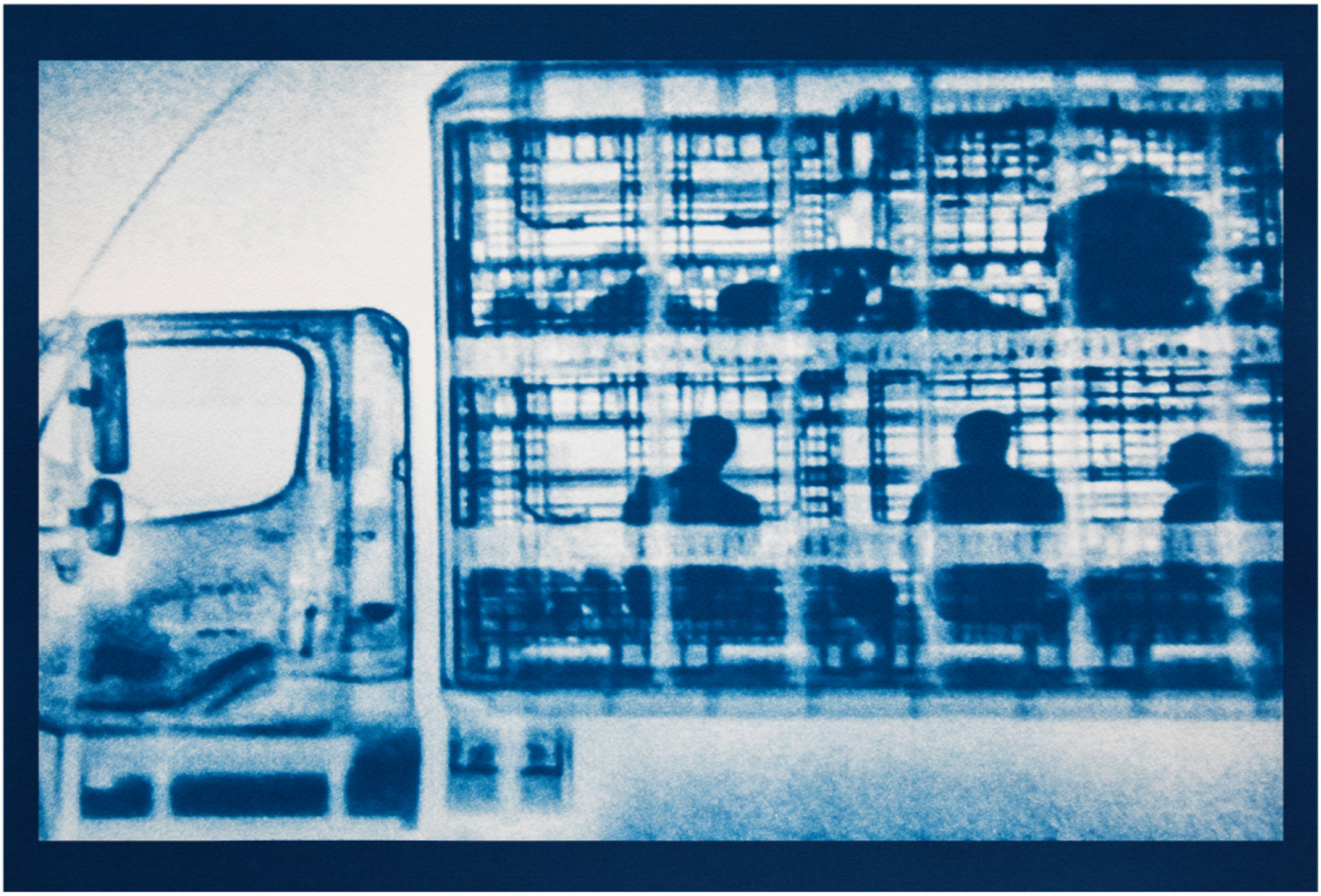


Backscatter blueprint

Artist **Noelle Mason** creates cyanotypes of new machine vision technology being used on international borders. Here she tells us more about it

Above: Gallinero, 2020

My work is concerned with the increasing mediation of social and political spaces through surveillance, dataveillance, and screen-based images and how the object of the screen silently shapes the content of these images.

Currently, my work is informed by the imaging technologies used to uphold international borders. Machine vision technology is increasingly relied upon to make this landscape legible. It is the increasing speed and over-reliance on digital images that my work intends to explore by showing the way subtle shifts in medium, from digital to analog, flat to sculptural, or static to temporal, can have a profound impact on the reception on the images we consume.

Backscatter Blueprint is part of a larger body of work called X-Ray Vision vs Invisibility. X-ray Vision vs Invisibility is about the phenomenological effects of machine vision technologies on the perception of undocumented immigrants crossing international borders. The body of work evolved to include related series: Backscatter Blueprint, Quilting Point, Valley of Shadows, and Ground Control, all of which remediate digital images made by machine vision into historic craft processes.

The work of an artist who uses appropriation, like myself, is to change the meaning of their source material through formal manipulations. Scale, editing, shape, colour, medium, etc. The change is an act of aggression done to the source image. In Backscatter Blueprint I am attempting to find a way of turning these images against themselves – against their original meaning and effect. The fact these images are 'appropriated' or I prefer stolen, is an integral part of the meaning of the work. Fatigued with digital life, craft has had a major resurgence inside and outside the art world. X-Ray Vision vs Invisibility cross-pollinates craft-coded mediums with the instantaneous images that machines produce to highlight the constructed and aestheticised nature of these persuasive source images.

Backscatter Blueprint is also invested in this dialogue. It explores how the tactile, embodied nature of a craft medium such as cyanotype can unsettle images in a way that changes our relationship with them.

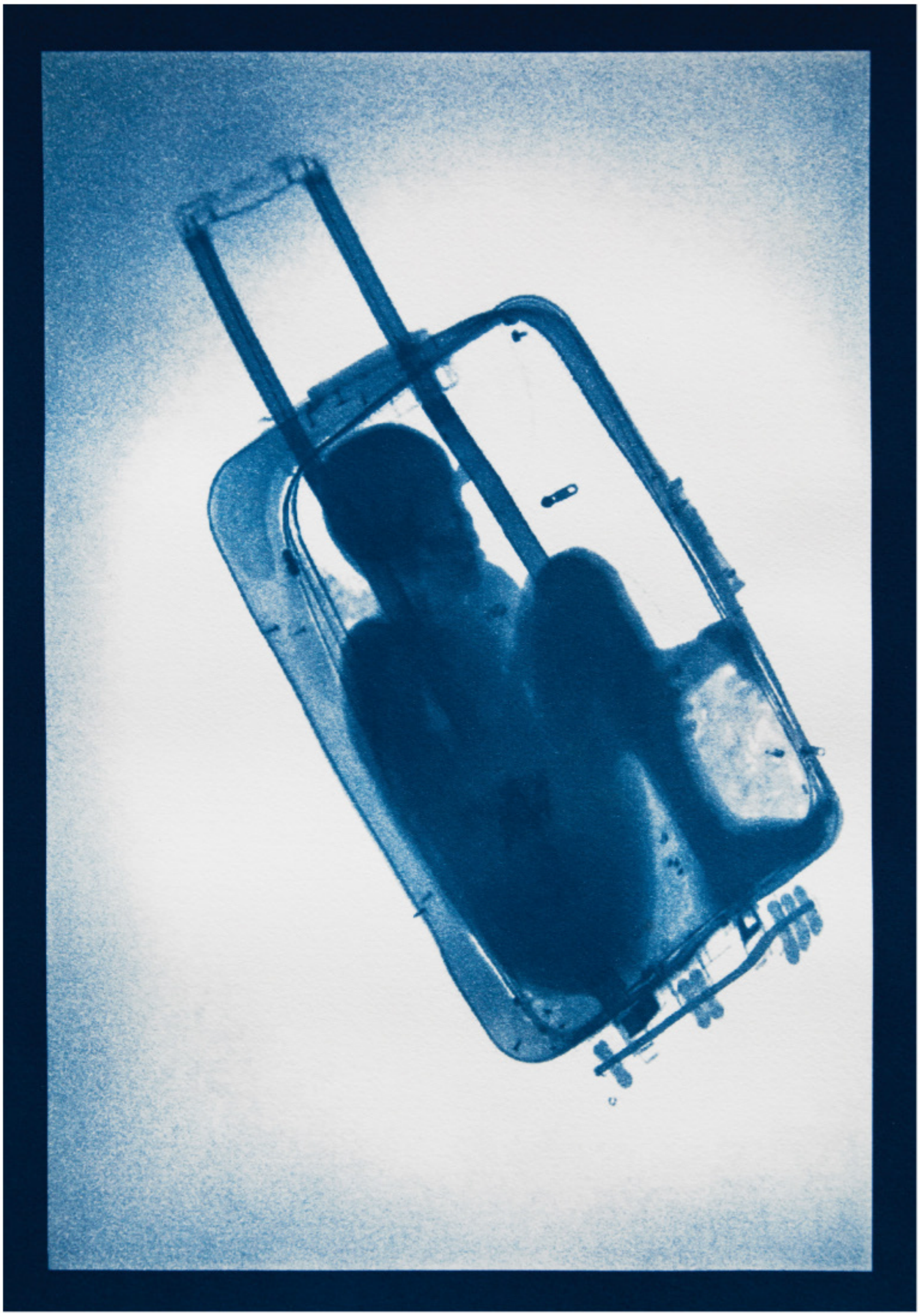
Bureaucracy and borders

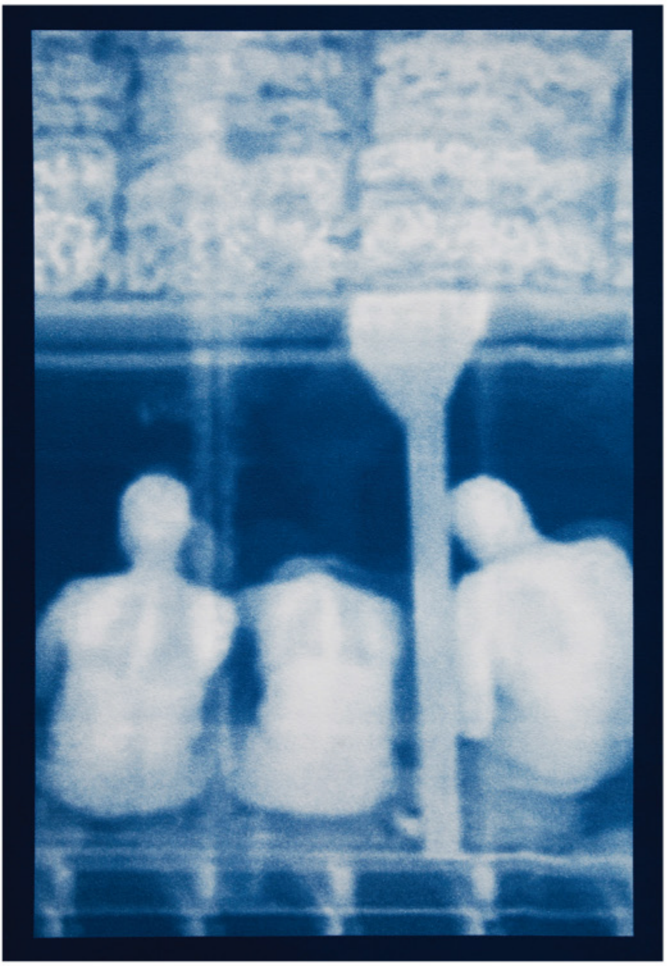
In Backscatter Blueprint I remediate machine-made images into unique and fragile objects to highlight the constructed and aestheticised nature of backscatter imagery and the role the aestheticisation plays in the bureaucratic narrative surrounding the ongoing crisis at international borders worldwide – a crisis that exists to segregate and pit working-class people against each other to defer the crisis of capitalism itself.

I first encountered backscatter imagery in 2006 when I was making work about a new surveillance technology being used at the airport in the wake of 9/11. There was a proposal in the US to deploy backscatter technology in airport security which at the time was quite controversial, the American Civil Liberties Union calling it a 'virtual strip search'. It is still used in airports today but has been largely replaced by Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) machines. The backscatter images that were produced at the time, and that were so controversial, resembled the much more invasive images seen in the series Backscatter Blueprint than the ones we now encounter at the airport made by AIT; blocky stick figures that lack any detail or resolution. In researching backscatter technology, I found that it was being tested on the US/Mexico border. Both being invested in a critique of surveillance and having grown up on the Tijuana/San Ysidro border in Southern California, I was immediately interested in working with the images.

Although my work had been about surveillance for some time, before making Backscatter Blueprint I had not used photographic processes in any significant way. I come from a background in sculpture and a large part of my work is in seeing how the meaning of something changes through medium transformation. This is a primary concern for sculpture historically. The first

Below: The Finding, 2020





works I made using the backscatter images were part of the series Quilting Point and are handmade counted cross-stitch embroideries. These embroiders focused not only on backscatter images but also on infrared images that were being taken of people crossing the US/Mexico border illegally. The use of cross-stitch was intended to dislocate the image from its original creation, through state surveillance mechanisms, and resituate it in mid-20th century home handicraft.

Counted cross-stitch changes the aesthetic experience of the image while conceptually drawing a connection between home and homeland, and how our anxieties around the idea of 'home' are used to justify the violent mechanisms produced to secure the territory considered as 'homeland'.

The second part of X-Ray Vision vs Invisibility was the Ground Control project that used hand-woven wool to re-mediate images being taken by a satellite using electromagnetic radiometry of places of conflict along the US/Mexico border. These images were made into a series of large Gobelin tapestries and displayed on the floor like a rug.

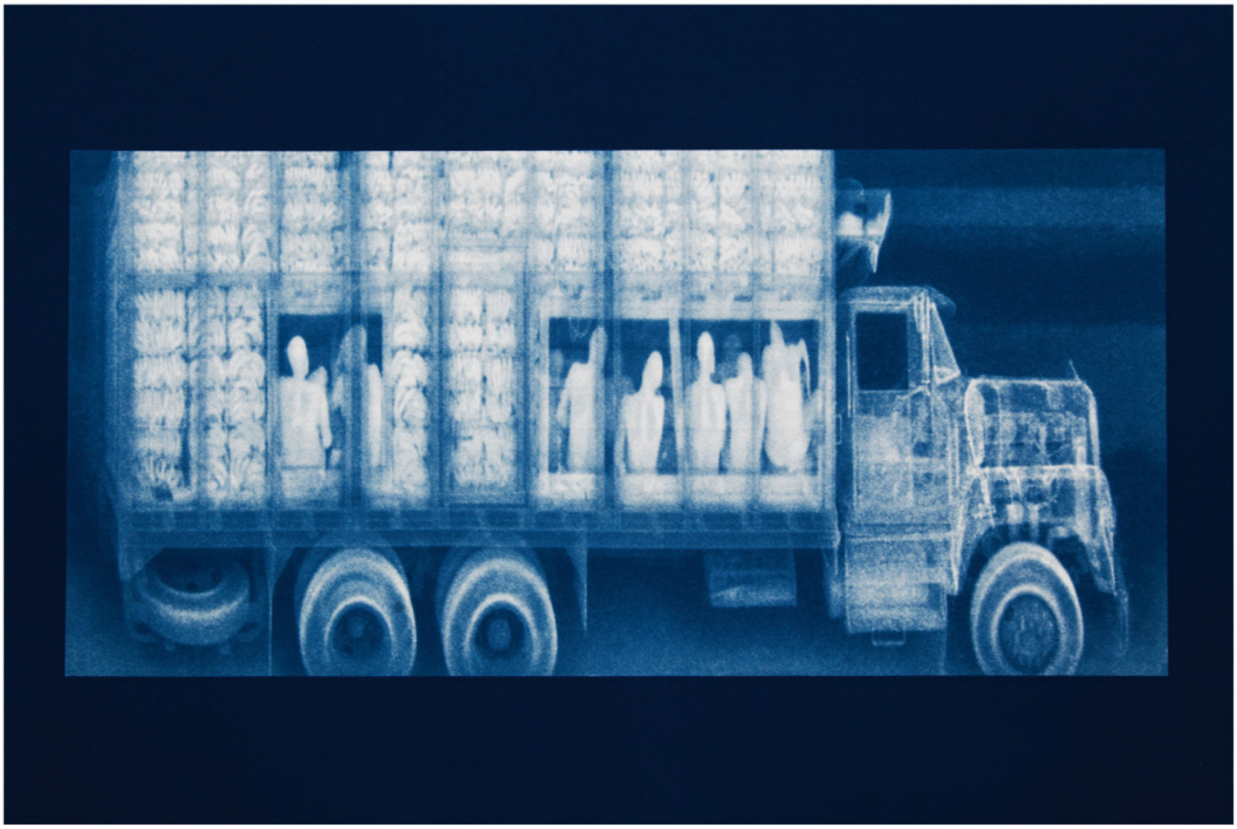
By the late 2010s the use of backscatter technology on international borders had become nearly ubiquitous and the amount of imagery had increased dramatically. At this point, I felt I needed to deal with more of the images I was collecting and to increase the scale beyond what I could do with embroidery.

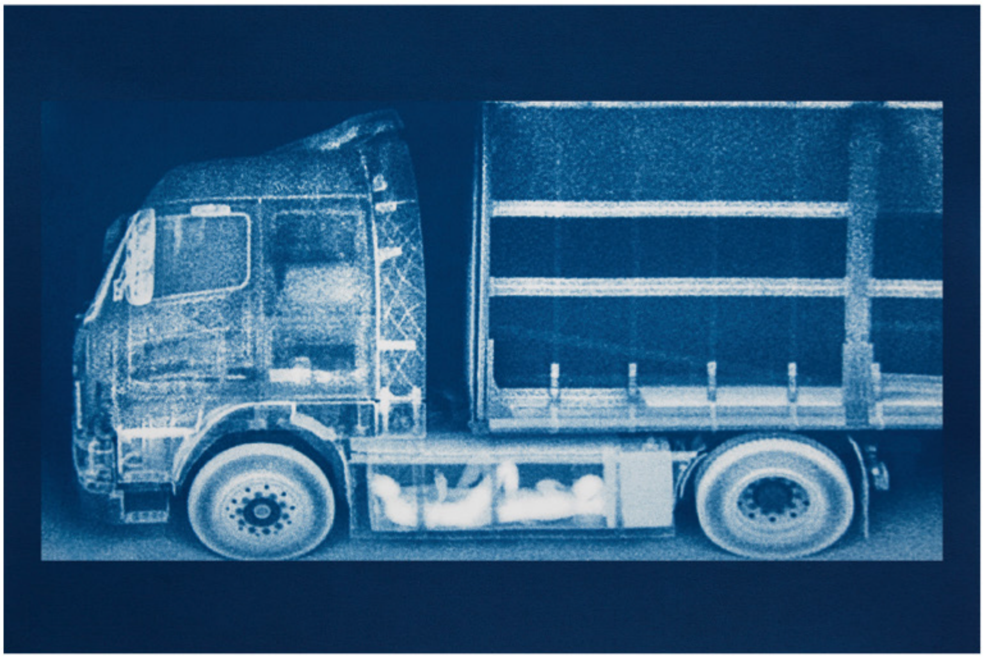
I had also begun to think more critically about the history of photography as it related specifically to this project. X-Ray Vision vs Invisibility was in many ways about the history of photography in terms of how it had contributed to a scientific worldview as well as to the project of colonialism and the way photographic technology has developed to continue that project today. I had always been interested in the more physical processes of photography from the 19th century and had seen many contemporary artists using cyanotype. Many of the projects that used cyanotype took the medium in a direction that either ignored its history entirely or was nostalgic and reactionary.

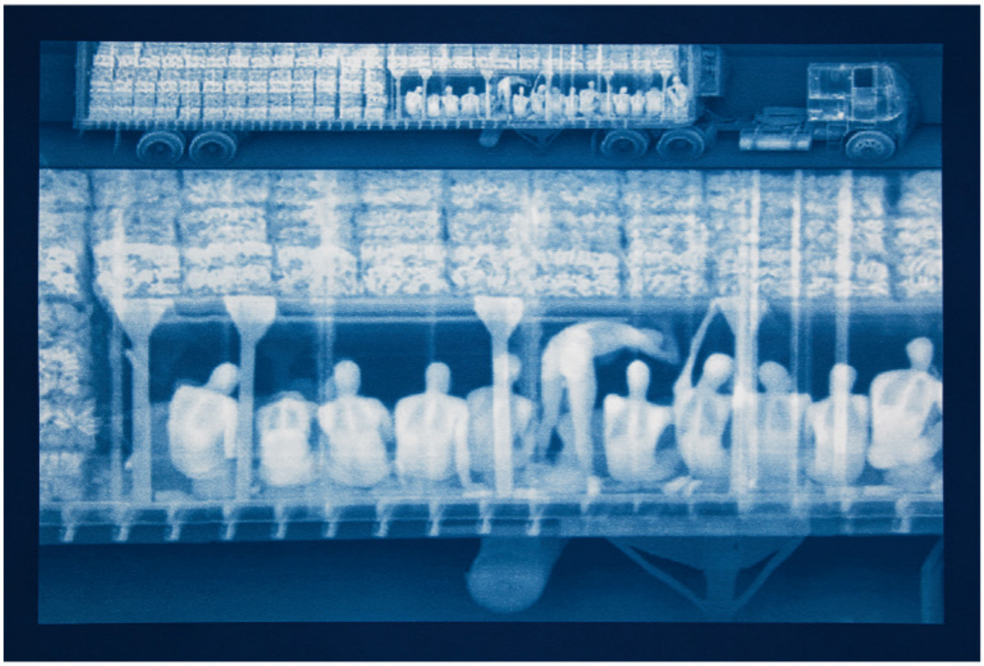
Cyanotype was discovered by an astronomer named John Herschel in 1842 and is one of the earliest forms of fixing a photographic image. A cyanotype is made by brushing a light-sensitive solution, produced by

Above: Three Graces, 2020

Right: Bananos, 2020



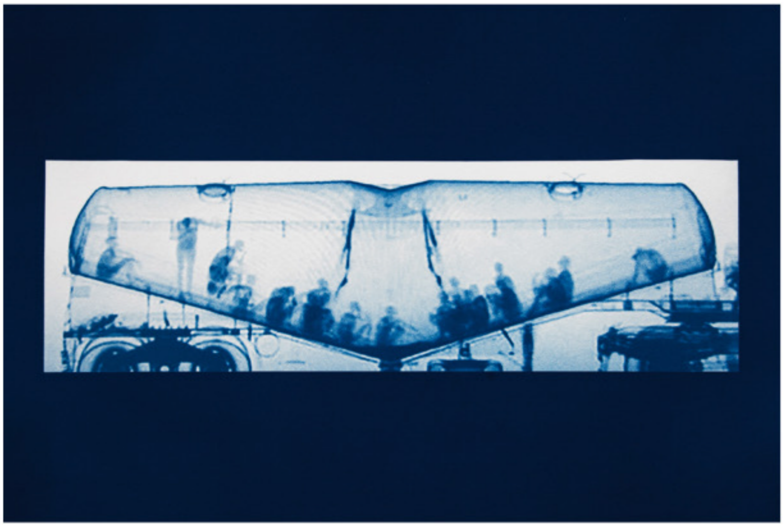




Above, top: Olympia, 2020

Above: Ultima Cena, 2020

Right: Man at the Crossroads, 2020



mixing ferric ammonium citrate and potassium ferricyanide, onto a substrate, which creates a negative image when exposed to UV light.

The first book produced using photographic illustrations was a book of cyanotypes of marine algae made by English botanist Anna Atkins and is an example of the integral part photography has played in the enlightenment project of scientific categorisation and rationalisation of the natural world. The cyanotype process became most well-known for its use in architectural renderings. It eliminated the cumbersome expense of hand-tracing original architectural drawings and by the 1890s had become the predominant means of reproducing both architectural plans and mechanical drawings.

I found that this compelling history resonated both formally and conceptually with the backscatter images I was collecting. The ubiquitous grid of these plans is echoed in every part of my project and is intended to critique the overdetermined use of the grid to organise and structure the visual field in Western image-making traditions from Renaissance perspective to modernism and current 3D modelling and VR systems.

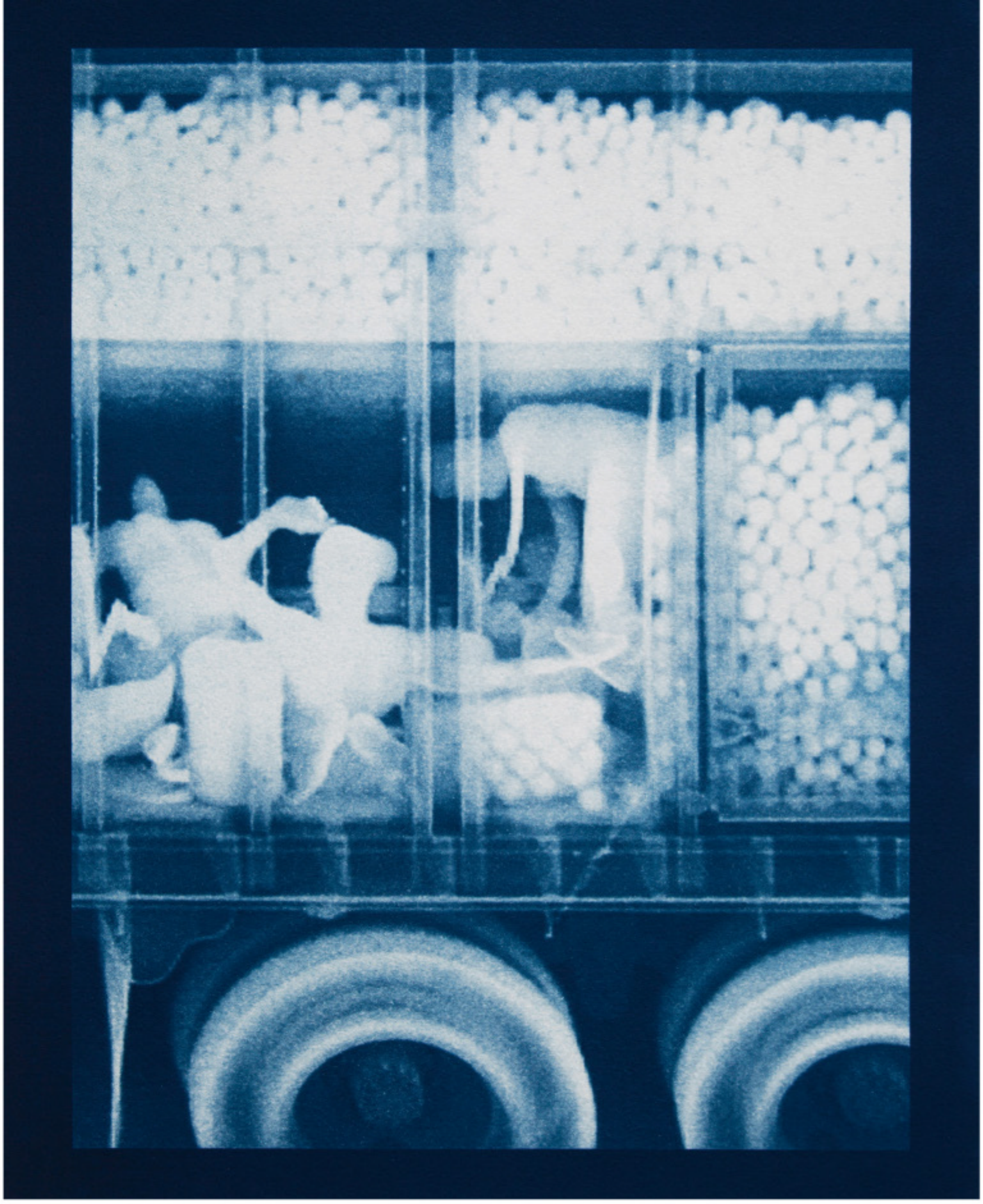
Jarring

The pictures made by a backscatter x-ray machine have a formal quality that is similar to the architectural plans once reproduced using the cyanotype process and is referenced in the title of the series Backscatter Blueprint. The x-ray's ability to see through both trucks and people in Backscatter Blueprint reveals an architectural grid that is not superimposed in front or behind but instead is joined in the image with the bodies of the people being smuggled in the same plane. These elevation-like images reveal a jarring tension between the mechanical grid of the trucks and the fragile bodies of their human cargo whose skins become translucent under the look of the x-ray machine much like the botanical specimens cataloged in Anna Atkins' early cyanotype experiments. The collapsing of both biological and mechanical into the same visual plane seems to resonate metaphorically with contemporary life 'on the grid;' a life inseparable from a technological grid that sustains it. A grid that the cyanotype, with its history in architecture and technical drawings, had a hand in building.

Compared to embroidery, the speed at which I could make a cyanotype image allowed me not only to be able to address more of the imagery I had collected but also to dramatically increase the scale of work produced. By enlarging the images and tiling them I could produce mural-size cyanotypes that push the psychological effect of the imagery even further. The largest of the images is 11 metres long and 4 metres high and is made up of 150 individual cyanotypes held to the wall with handmade porcelain pushpins. The pins hold the top of the paper in place while the bottom is allowed to float free of the wall. The breaks between individual 'tiles' and the free-floating paper allow the materiality of the work to assert itself. The handmade pushpins act as a signifier for the bureaucratic nature of the source image.

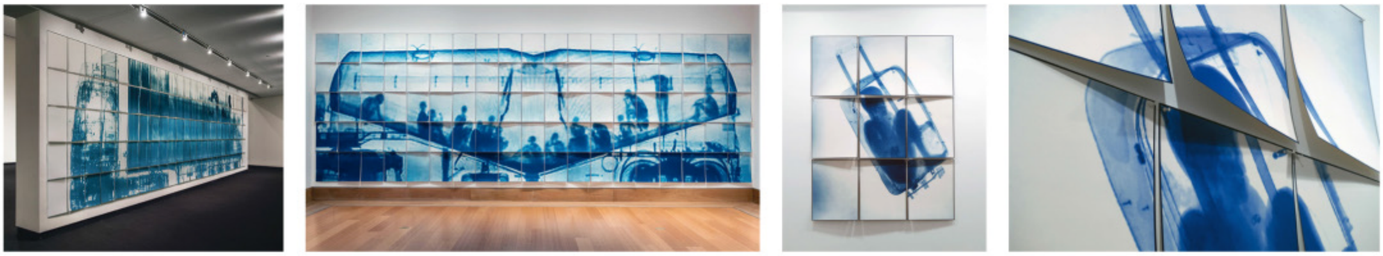
The scale of the work makes the bodies in the image child-size and the trucks architectural in scale. This allows the image to envelop the viewer and induces the sense of being inside the truck. This shift in scale creates a more complicated psychological relationship with the figures that shifts between identification and speculation.

Reproducing machine vision imagery intended for digital screen-based viewing using an analog historical process developed at the beginning of the modern period asks us to consider the precedent for digital imaging which was developed from Western enlightenment vision technologies that began with perspectival drawing and optical devices such as the camera lucida. Backscatter Blueprint embodies the contradiction that the source images hide; the phantasmagorical images transforming our world today, carry with them the relics of history and embody a demand for reason and clarity that distorts the world in accordance with these desires – expanding, stretching, accelerating, freezing, and collapsing time and space. This history is hidden behind the glittering spectacle and speed of the digital screen. Backscatter Blueprint attempts instead to slow us down, bring us closer, and allow us to experience an aesthetic dimension of the image that is otherwise obscured.



Above: Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe, 2020

Below: Installation shots of the project, 2021



Noelle Mason is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work is about the subtle seductiveness of power facilitated by systems of visual and institutional control. Noelle's work has been shown nationally and internationally in galleries and institutions worldwide, including the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Orlando Museum of Art, the Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She is the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Artist Grant, the Jerome Fellowship, the Santo Foundation Individual Artist Grant, the Florida Prize for Contemporary Art, and the Southern Prize. In 2004, Noelle was a resident at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and holds the Associate Professor of Art position at the University of South Florida. She is the Founding Director and Curator of Parallelogram Gallery in Tampa, FL.
See **@nonomason** on Instagram, or **noellemason.com** for more.

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The way of the cowboy

A former Cartier executive turned pro photographer, Anouk Krantz is a passionate chronicler of cowboy culture in the Americas. **Geoff Harris** finds out more

Above: Cabaña La Frontera, Uruguay

Right: Libertad, Guatemala

A lot of pros come to photography after a career change, but few had such a 'glittering' background as French-born fine-art and documentary photographer Anouk Krantz.

Anouk worked for top jewellery and lifestyle brand Cartier in New York before giving it all up to study at the International Center for Photography after 9/11. High-class bling's loss proved to be photography's gain, however, as her latest book, *Frontier: Cowboys of the Americas*, reveals. It's a fascinating and expansive photo project on the many manifestations of cowboy culture, encompassing the North American cowboy that's forever enshrined in popular culture, the Central American 'vaquero' and the South American 'gaucho.' These characters have long fascinated Anouk, who comes from a very, very different world. 'I am an explorer,' she explains. 'I explore places. I explore people. I love to exchange with those who are different, those with another set of convictions. I try to learn about them and then understand them, what is important to them, what they love and what they fear, so I might learn what makes us different and... the same.'

Back in the saddle

As a photographer, Anouk was always drawn to remote places and seeing how local people lived. After exploring countries as diverse as Cambodia and Guatemala, her first photography book was about wild horses living on Cumberland Island, off the US state of Georgia (2017). Much to her delight, this proved to be an international best seller and sowed the seeds for her subsequent work with cowboys. 'It all began with getting the phone number of one rancher,' she recalls.

Frontier is Anouk's fourth book on ranchers and cowboy culture ('cowboys' is used as a generic term here, but many women feature in her work too). It follows on from *West: The American Cowboy* and *American Cowboys*. 'Growing up in France, I was fascinated by the image of the American cowboy,' she elaborates. 'I was intrigued with their lives as they were portrayed through books and on film as irreverent, rugged frontiersmen, with lives full of romance, danger, adventure, and intrigue… while living in New York I travelled out West to visit a part of the country that I had always wanted to explore.'

Genuine cowboys are busy people with far-from-romantic lives, so winning their trust and getting them to be themselves in front of the camera took some time for an outsider such as Anouk. 'It was difficult at first. Many of these ranchers – private and sceptical of strangers – didn't have the time or interest to share their lives with me. What was I doing here and why could I possibly be interested in them? As they got to know me, they invited me into their world.'

Gathering the images for *Frontier* and Anouk's other cowboy books wasn't just a question of turning up at tourist-friendly ranches or hanging out in saloons, either.

El Seco, Guatemala

Classic, USA

Re-ride, USA

The XIT cattle ranch in the Texas Panhandle

As Anouk explains, 'This journey across the Americas came with unexpected challenges, and my limits were tested time and again. I navigated through cartel-controlled roads, was held at gunpoint, and endured sickness and horse wrecks. I had to put my trust in the hands of local gauchos, vaqueros, and cowboys.'

Just one camera and lens

Indeed, Anouk's extensive travels for the *Frontier* project would have been worth a book on their own. She journeyed from the Canadian Rockies to the American West, and then down to remote parts of Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, and the grasslands of Argentinia. Vastly different though these terrains may be, Anouk discovered loose similarities amongst her subjects that stretched all across the Americas. 'It was a revelation to learn of a vast, thriving culture, which, after generations, continues to reflect the same basic tenets, virtues, and customs with unwavering pride. Their daily lives and cultures each have their own nuances and yet all belong to a singular tapestry of heritage.'

Thanks to Hollywood, we tend to visualise cowboys and their environments in Technicolour, but Anouk shot in black & white for this and previous projects as she prefers a more minimalist style that strikes a strong emotional chord – without the distractions of colour. She embedded herself into cowboy communities, shooting what she saw around her in a classic documentary style. None of the images in *Frontier* are artificially posed. Anouk keeps her gear simple too: all the images for the book were taken with a Fujifilm GFX100 and 45mm lens.

As well as cowboys at work, rodeos proved another rich source of inspiration and contacts too (it'll be reassuring for cowboy fans to hear that thousands of rodeos still take place across the Americas). As eminent cowboy historian Michael R Grauer notes in his foreword to Anouk's book, 'The foundation of rodeo remains grounded in the work of cowboys, vaqueros, gauchos, drovers, and cowhands from the sixteenth century onward, and of the human on horseback symbolising freedom and liberty.'

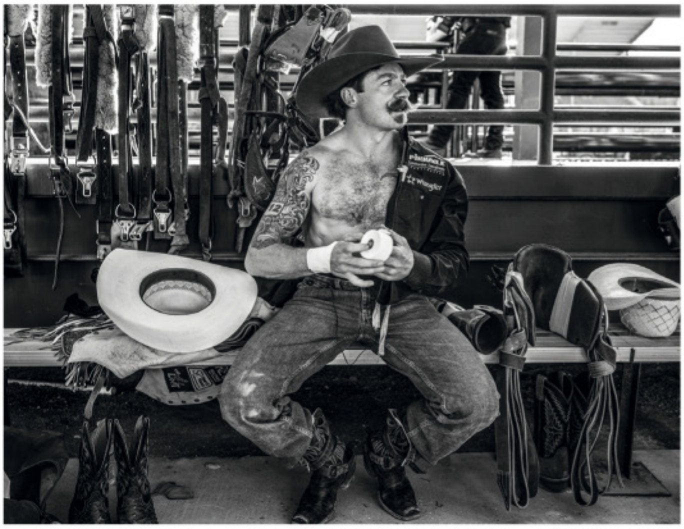
Undying spirit

At the heart of Anouk's work lies a desire to capture this spirit, along with the determination of her geographically disparate subjects to uphold time-honoured traditions – despite the pressures of an increasingly globalised, urbanised and 'samey' world. As she notes, 'These cowboy cultures may well be considered the very heart of these nations and continue to preserve a Western spirit that shall never dim.'

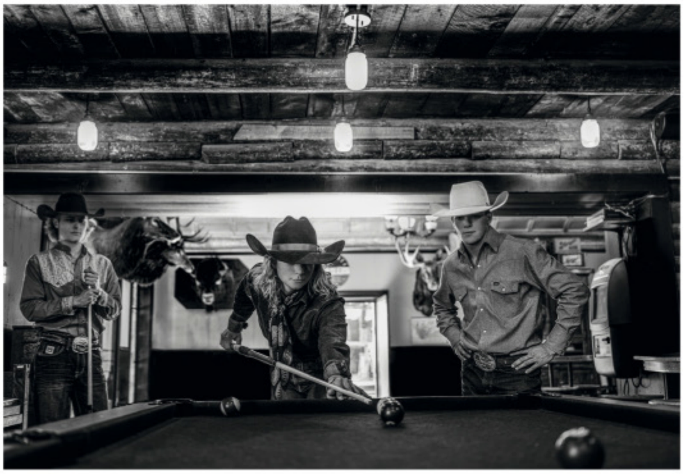
While the nearest that many photographers in the UK will ever get to a real cowboy is seeing one on a screen, Anouk's commitment to understanding her subject and upholding a consistent and honest approach is something that everyone can learn from – whether we are in Wyoming or Woking.

Anouk Krantz

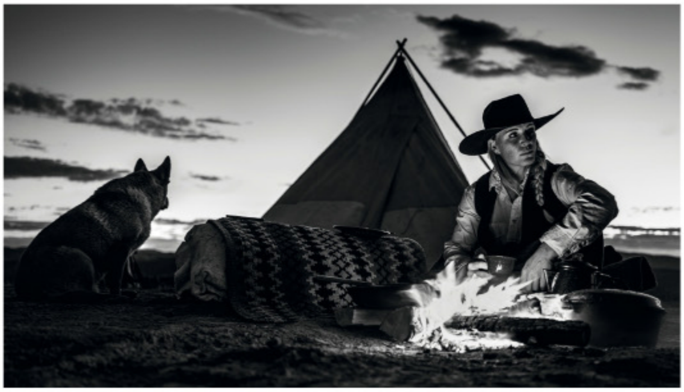
Born and raised in France, Anouk Krantz has become the world's leading photographer of cowboy culture in North America. A graduate of the Interantional Center of Photography in New York, her images have been widely exhibited worldwide. Anouk's latest book, *Frontier: Cowboys of the Americas*, is published by Images Publishing and is available now from all good booksellers for £70. For more on Anouk, see **www.anoukkrantz.com**



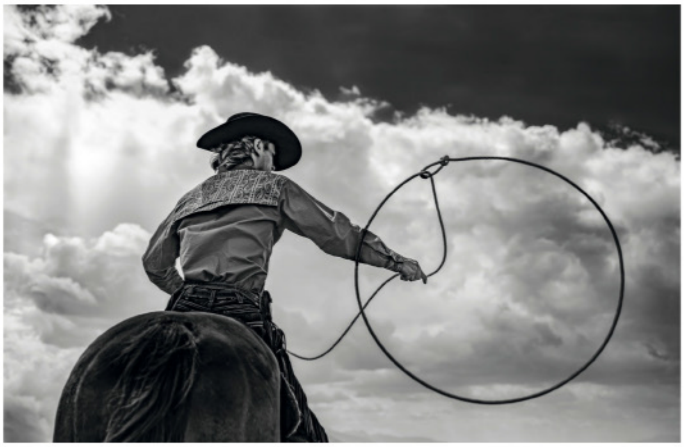
Bareback Rider, USA



The Game, USA



The Old West, USA



The Roper II, USA

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FILM STARS

Seeing double

John Wade looks into the weird world of binocular cameras

Building a camera with a telephoto lens into a pair of binoculars is a pretty good idea, especially if you are into sport or wildlife photography. It has been tried in digital cameras, mostly as a novelty or just a toy. But in the film world, a select few manufacturers took the idea more seriously. Binocular cameras were made for 35mm, 110 and 16mm film. Today, all are collectable and most are usable: 35mm film is still easy to buy; 110 can be obtained from specialist dealers like Analogue Wonderland and the Lomography shop; and, for the diehard enthusiast, 16mm can be bought as cine film and loaded into the different cartridges used by individual cameras.

But before looking at cameras, let's start with a few words for those who might not be familiar with binocular nomenclature and usage. Binocular specification is defined by two figures with an 'x' between them – 7x20, 8x32, 11x60, for example. The first figure refers to the magnification, meaning how much the image is enlarged; the second figure refers to the diameter of the objective lens (the one at the front), controlling how much light is transmitted and therefore the brightness of the image. Most good binoculars have individual dioptre controls on each lens to focus according to the user's eyesight, plus a separate control to focus the lenses on near or far subjects.

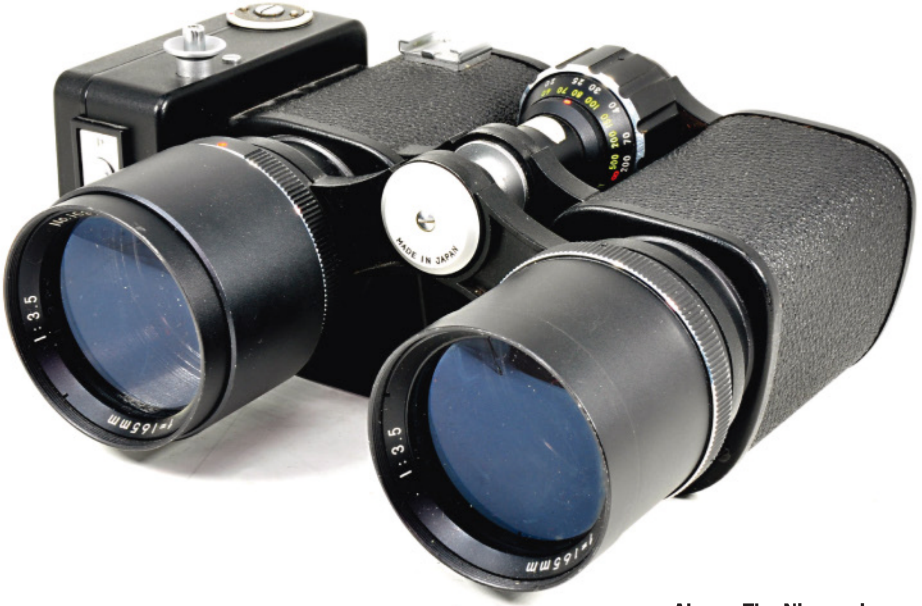
35mm binocular cameras

Nicnon

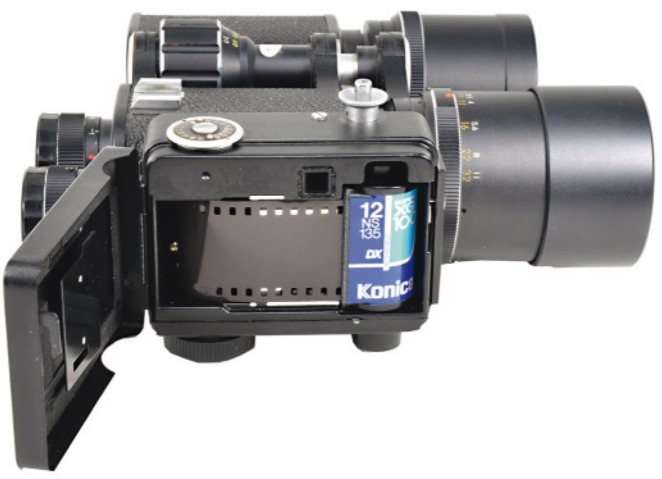
LAUNCHED: 1968

GUIDE PRICE: £80-120

With one exception, all the models reviewed here use a camera with its own lens mounted on a pair of binoculars. The Japanese Nicnon, made by the Nichiryo Trading Company, is that exception. Here, one of the binocular lenses doubles as the camera lens, recording a half-frame 18x24mm image on film, via a semi-silvered mirror, to a side-mounted camera. The binoculars spec is 7x50, the camera/binocular lens is a 165mm f/3.5 Nicnon and the attached camera is similar to, but not the same as, a Ricoh Auto Half. It incorporates a built-in clockwork motor drive to advance the film automatically after each exposure. The lens used for shooting has a retractable hood. Shutter speeds of 1/60-1/250sec are set by a slider on the rear of the body and apertures of f/3.5-11 are set on the shooting lens. An engraved plate on the side offers suggestions for apertures when using a choice of film speeds at 1/125sec. Dioptre controls are found on each lens and tandem focusing of both lenses is by a knob between them. At nearly 2 kilos, the Nicnon is very heavy, making it uncomfortably awkward to use.



Above: The Nicnon, in which one binocular lens doubles as the camera lens



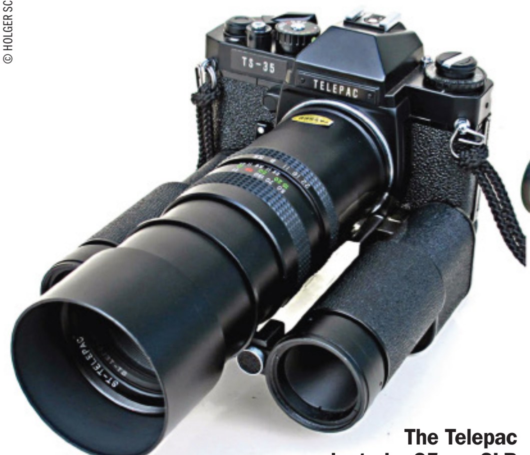
Left: Film loaded into the camera on the side of the Nicnon with a lens hood extended on its shooting lens

Telepac TS-35

LAUNCHED: 1982

GUIDE PRICE: £300-500

Made in Japan by Daichu Products, and based on a Ricoh KR-10 body, this is an aperture-priority, full-frame single lens reflex (SLR) with a built-in meter and a pair of quality 9x30 binoculars grafted onto the base. The 300mm f/5.6 Telepac lens is non-interchangeable with its focusing coupled to the binocular lenses' focus controls. Shutter speeds run 4-1/1,000sec.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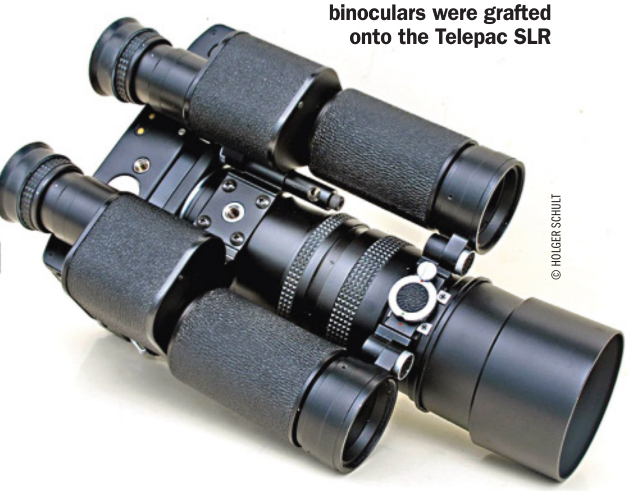
The Telepac adapted a 35mm SLR for use with binoculars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From below: how the binoculars were grafted onto the Telepac SLR

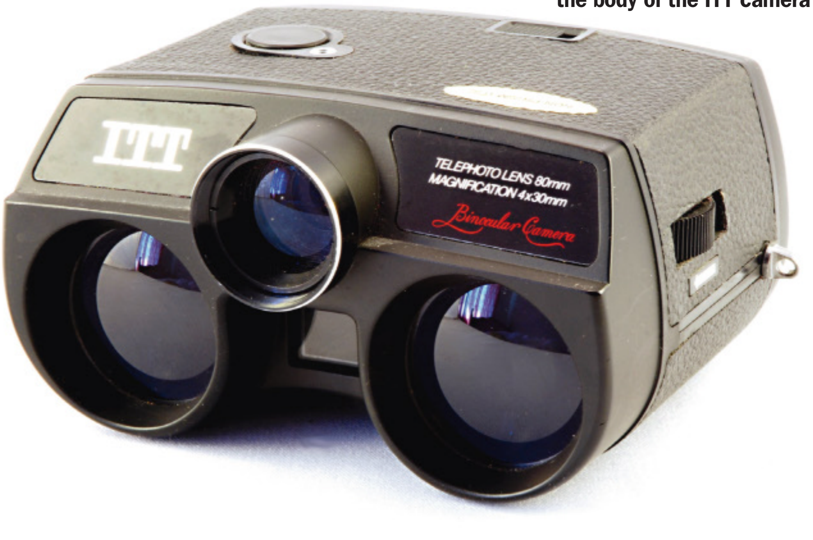
110 binocular cameras

ITT Binocular Camera

LAUNCHED: 1979

GUIDE PRICE: £10-20

The ITT name was found on many simple 110 cameras that were most likely made by Haking. For this model, the camera was incorporated into a pair of 4x30 binoculars. The 80mm camera lens, situated between and above the binocular lenses matches the binoculars' magnification. Although the binoculars can be used as the viewfinder, a separate viewfinder is also placed between the eyepieces. The binocular lenses are focused by a control on the base, the camera lens has a fixed aperture of around f/11, the single speed shutter of about 1/125sec is released by a button on the top and film is advanced by a thumbwheel on the side. There is no other form of control. Image size is the standard 110 format of 13x17mm.



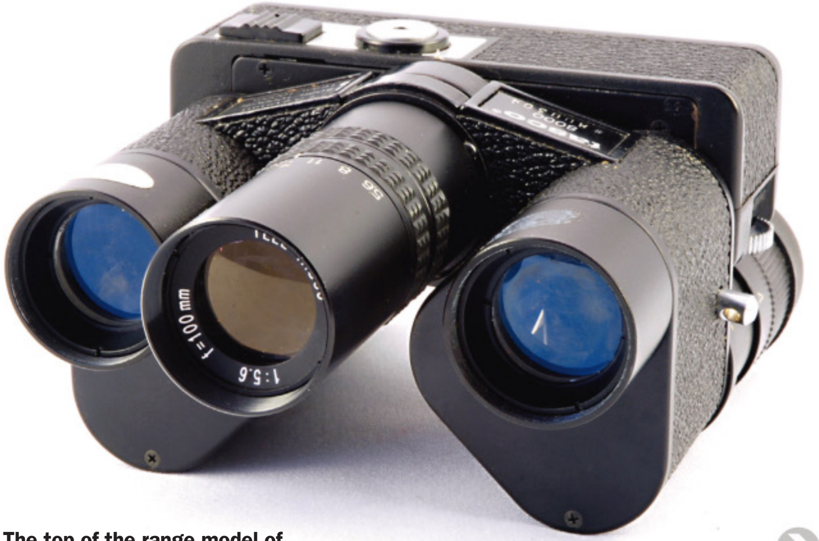
Binoculars and camera were moulded together in the body of the ITT camera

Tasco Bino/Cam 8000

LAUNCHED: 1980

GUIDE PRICE: £20-30

After some success with two more sparsely specified binocular cameras in the 1970s, Tasco produced this top-of-the range model that coupled a 110 film camera to produce the usual 13x17mm image size with a pair of 7x20mm binoculars. The Tele-Tasco 100mm f/5.6 fixed focus camera lens situated between the binocular lenses approximates the magnification of their view. Two speeds of 1/125sec and 1/250sec, identified only as '1' and '2', are set by a slider beside the top-mounted shutter release. Apertures are set on the lens, which is interchangeable on a screw mount with 70mm and 150mm lenses for slightly wider and longer angles of view, though rendering the binoculars less useful as a viewfinder. A table-top tripod and filters were originally available as accessories, though rarely seen today.



The top of the range model of the Tasco Bino/Cam models

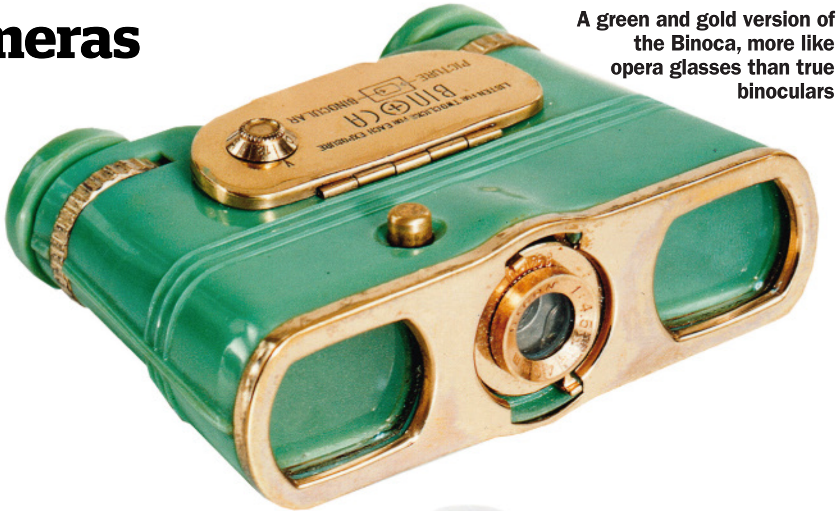
16mm binocular cameras

Binoca Picture Binocular

LAUNCHED: 1950

GUIDE PRICE: £200-250

Rather than true binoculars, this one, made by the Japanese Binoca Company, might be better thought of as a pair of 2.5x magnification opera glasses, the kind used in theatres to view the stage from far-off audience seats. The camera, mounted internally between the binocular lenses to produce a 10x14mm image, uses a fixed focus Bicon 40mm lens with a fixed f/4.5 aperture. Shutter speeds run 1/25–1/100sec. It's doubtful that even the bright lights of a theatre would have been enough to allow photography of a typical theatrical production, but the camera could have been used successfully outdoors. It was sold in a range of colours that included red, blue, green and grey.



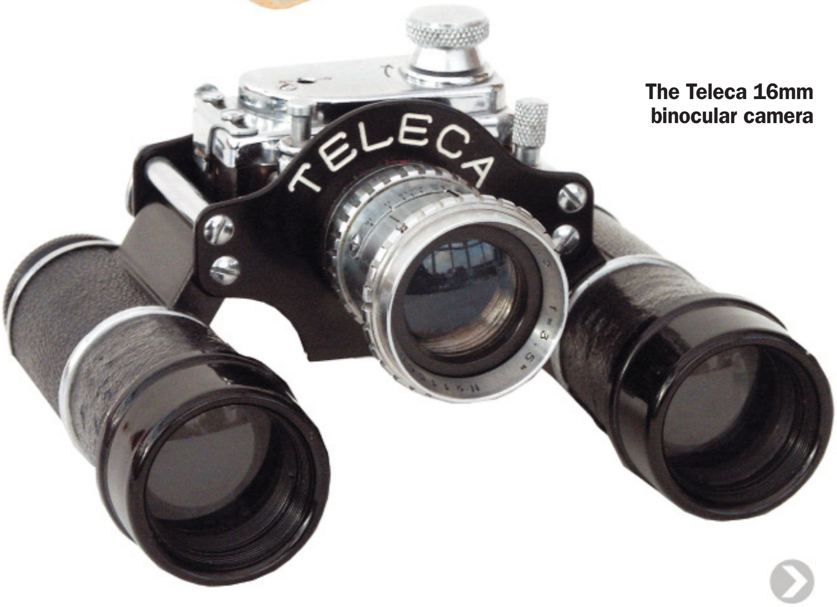
A green and gold version of the Binoca, more like opera glasses than true binoculars

Teleca

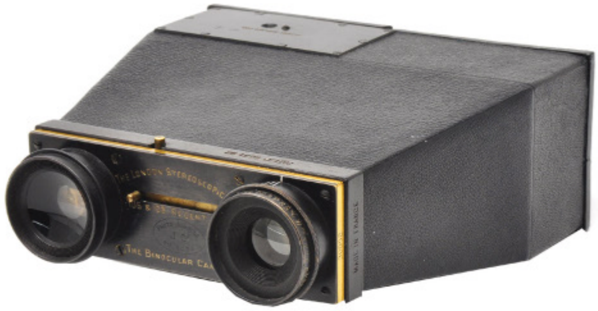
LAUNCHED: 1950

GUIDE PRICE: £350-500

Although this is officially a 16mm camera, the Teleca, made by the Japanese Toko Photo Company, could also accept the tiny 17.5mm roll films made for Hit cameras. Both drop into a compartment on the top of the body and the image size is 10x14mm. The camera lens is a 90mm f/4.5 Telesigmar that focuses from 10ft to infinity and stops down to f/16. It is mounted above and between a pair of unspecified spec binoculars whose lenses individually focus by rotating rings on the back. Shutter speeds, set by a sliding lever in front of the film chamber, run 1/25-1/100sec.



The Teleca 16mm binocular camera



The Photo-Jumelle Binocular Camera was not what it seemed

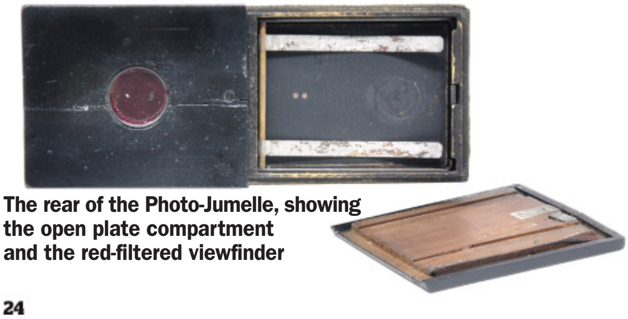
Photo-Jumelle Binocular Camera

LAUNCHED: 1892

GUIDE PRICE: £150-200

Not every camera called a binocular camera was actually a binocular camera. This one might look like an ancient pair of binoculars, but the lens on the right, as you face the camera, takes the pictures, while the one on the left is the viewfinder, through which the subject is viewed via an eye-level round aperture in the back of the body. The viewfinder takes up half the body. The other half contains a holder for 12 plates positioned behind the lens.

Changing the plates between exposures is a bit of an art. The camera is first turned on its back with the lenses pointing upwards, then a rod on the side of the body is pulled. The action leaves the just-exposed plate in position behind the lens, while the other 11 are pulled sideways into the viewfinder compartment. The exposed plate then falls to the base of the camera. When the rod is pressed back into the body, the rest of the plates are pushed into position again behind the lens, leaving the exposed plate at the bottom of the stack and a fresh one on top ready for the next exposure. To prevent the stack of plates being exposed to light when they are pulled into the viewfinder compartment, the viewfinder's front lens has a metal cover over it that only moves aside when the shutter is tensioned, and the rear eyepiece has a red filter permanently fitted.



The rear of the Photo-Jumelle, showing the open plate compartment and the red-filtered viewfinder

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Cambinox

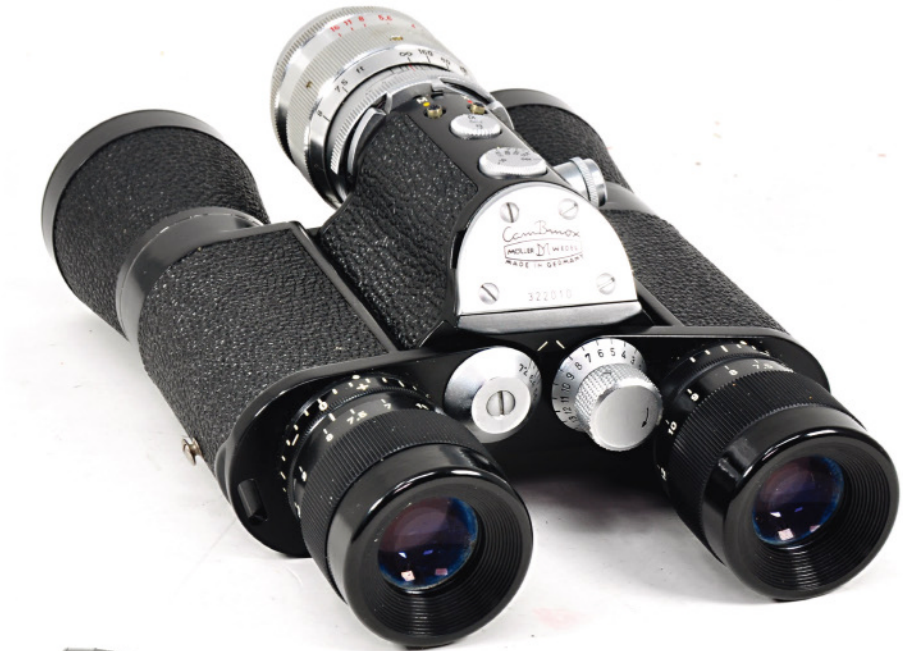
LAUNCHED: 1956

GUIDE PRICE: £400-500

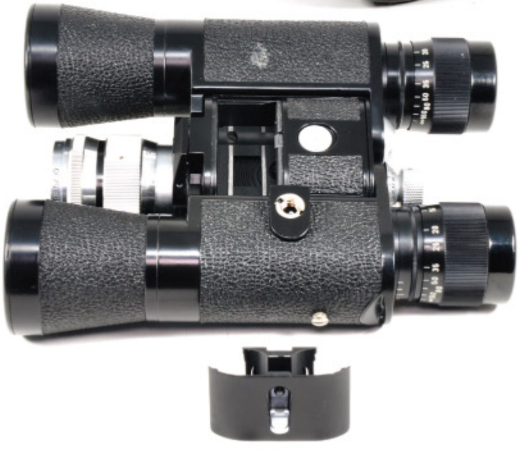
With the exception of the Nicnon, most models of this type coupled the camera with a pair of inferior binoculars. Not so the Cambinox, which was made in Germany by the J.D. Möller company. This one uses a pair of high quality 7x35 binoculars and mates them to a camera whose lens is mounted above and between the binocular lenses. The camera shoots 10x14mm images on 16mm film, and the standard lens is a 90mm f/3.5 which produces an image the same magnification as that of the binoculars. It is interchangeable on a bayonet mount with a 35mm f/3.5 wide-angle lens, plus 135mm f/3.5 and 180mm f/3.5 telephotos. Speeds of 1/30–1/800sec are set on a small dial behind the lens. A knob on the back is wound prior to exposure to tension and fire the focal plane shutter, and also acts as a frame counter.

Film, loaded into a retractable cradle, is wound behind the shutter and across the bottom of the camera at right angles to the lens, receiving its image via a prism to the rear of the lens. Individual rings adjust the binocular lenses according to the user's eyesight, and then focusing from 7ft to infinity is adjusted by adjacent rings. Focus readings are then transferred manually to the camera lens which also displays a depth of field scale. Apertures are set on a ring at the front of the lens. The shutter is synchronised for 'X' and 'M' flash settings and released by a button on the side of the lens housing, falling easily under the right index finger when the binoculars are raised to the eyes. When it was launched, accessories included an enlarger, developing tank and projector.

Despite 16mm not being the most practical format for use today, the sheer quality of the Cambinox makes it the best of all the binocular cameras.



Above: The Cambinox was the best specified of all binocular cameras



Left: How the film was loaded into the base of the Cambinox at right angles to the lens

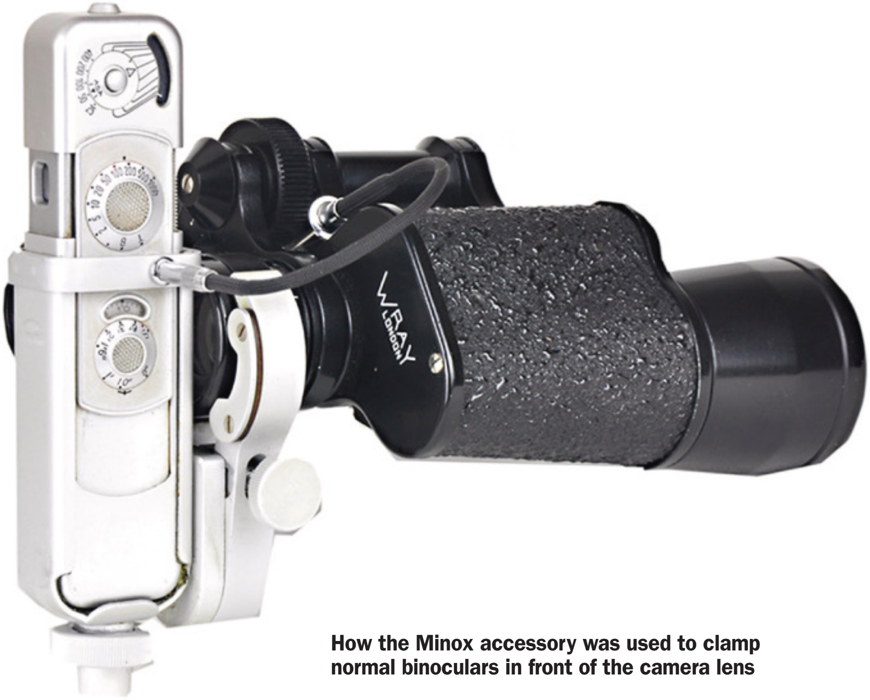
Minox Binocular Attachment

LAUNCHED: 1952

GUIDE PRICE: £15-25

With the exception of the Minox EC and some very early cameras most Minox subminiature models, up to their demise in 1975, could be fitted with a series of clamps that facilitated the addition of various accessories. One of these was a binoculars clamp.

The accessory clicks into a socket on the end of the camera body to place a cable release adapter in front of the shutter release and pincher-like jaws in front of the lens. Using this, one lens of the binoculars is clamped in front of the camera lens, which is focused at infinity, while the other binocular lens is used as a viewfinder. It was recommended that the exposure be doubled to compensate for light loss through the extra layers of glass.



How the Minox accessory was used to clamp normal binoculars in front of the camera lens

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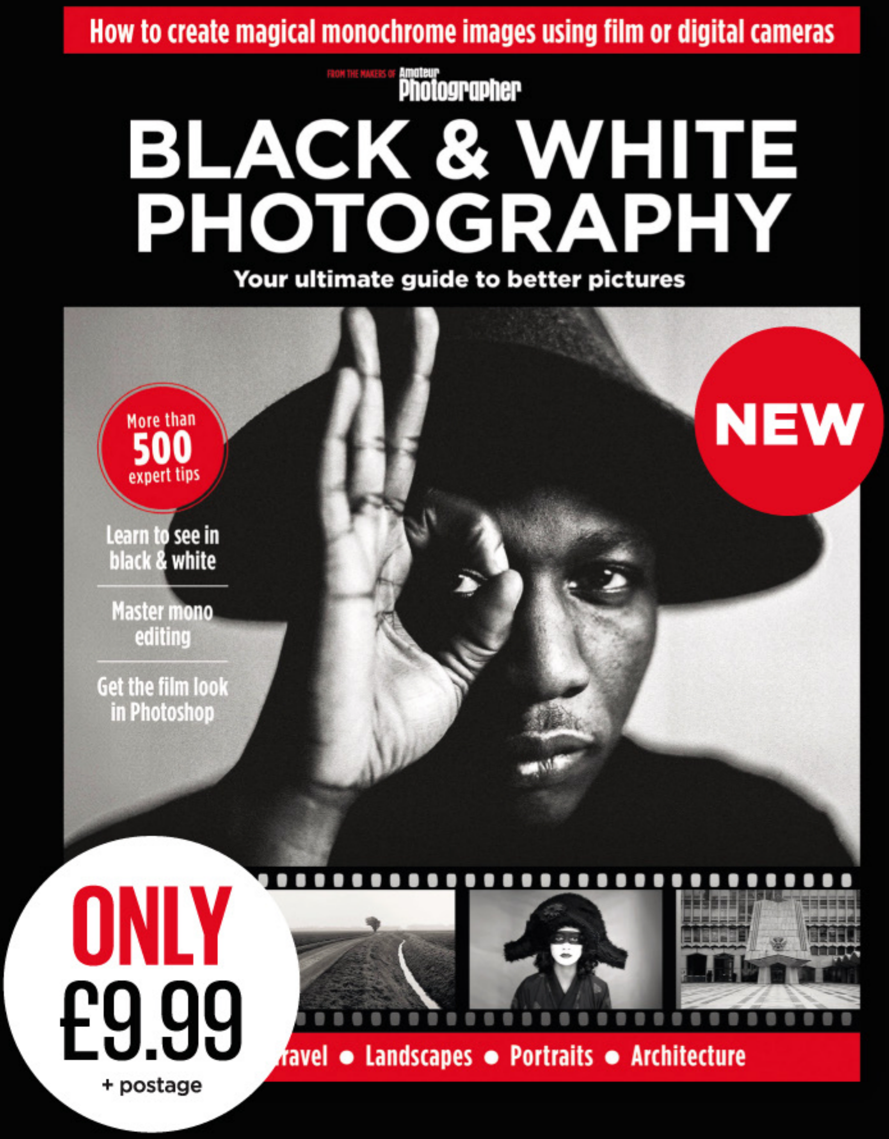
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SCAN ME

The camera system is a cut above most foldables
Honor Magic V3, 90mm equivalent, 1/750sec at f/3, ISO 50

Honor Magic V3

Nigel Atherton tests the world's thinnest and lightest vertically folding phone with a tablet-sized screen

The foldable sector is one of the fastest growing segments of the smartphone market, and its latest addition is the Honor Magic V3. This claims the title of the world's thinnest and lightest vertically folding phone, beating its own predecessor, the Honor Magic V2. Despite its diminutive dimensions it offers an impressive spec list that, on paper, beats many of its competitors, such as the OnePlus Open, Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 6, and the Vivo X Fold3 Pro.

The device is available in three colours – Velvet Black, Tundra Green and Reddish Brown – and costs £1,699 for the 512GB version (256GB and 1TB versions are also available). I had the black version for review, but if I was buying one, I'd be tempted by the brown and gold one, which looks very classy.

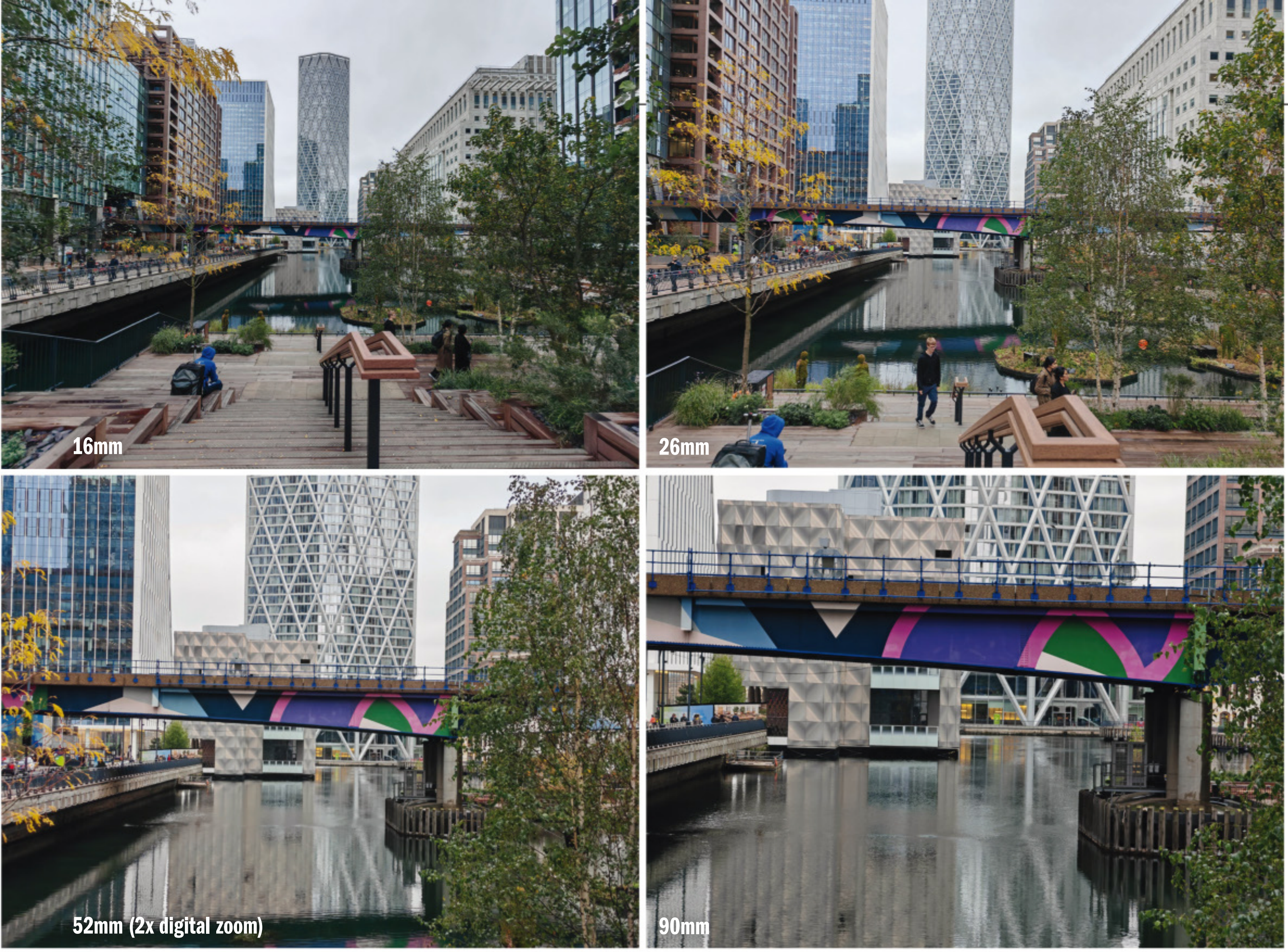
Why foldable?

Clamshell-style folding phones were once all the rage, but they were killed off by the iPhone, which set the agenda for what a phone should look like for over a decade. But when Samsung introduced its Fold and Flip foldable phones in 2019,

At a glance

£1,699 (512GB storage)

- 50MP, 23mm equivalent f/1.6 main camera
- 50MP, 90mm equivalent f/3.0 telephoto camera
- 40MP, 16mm equivalent f/2.2 ultra-wide camera
- 2x 20MP f/2.2 selfie cameras
- 4K 30fps, 1080p 30fps video recording
- 6.3in OLED front screen
- 7.92in AMOLED main screen
- Android 14


16mm

26mm

52mm (2x digital zoom)

90mm

This comparison shows the angles of view of the three camera lenses, along with 2x digital zoom from the main camera

with a single bendable screen that folded with the casing, it discovered that the demand for such phones hadn't died, it had merely been dormant, waiting for the technology to catch up. Samsung is currently on its sixth iteration of its Flip and Fold phones but is now no longer the sole purveyor.

There are two types of foldable: those that fold in half across their width to become super-compact (known as 'flip' phones) and those, like the Honor Magic V3, that fold along the length and open out to create a double size screen (the 'fold' phones). Although my wife is a flip phone addict, for me it has to be the fold style all the way. It's like having a tablet that folds in half and goes in your pocket, and what's not to like about that?

But of course, there are some drawbacks. Firstly, foldables are bigger and heavier, and I find that it can feel like you're carrying two bar phones hinged together, which creates quite a bulk in your pocket. Secondly the battery life is generally not as good and, crucially from my point of view, the camera has traditionally been inferior to those in more conventional phones. And let's not forget the price, because foldables tend to be considerably more expensive.

Handling and design

The Honor Magic V3 goes some way to mitigating most of those disadvantages. Firstly, when folded it's only 9.2mm thick and weighs only 226 grams. For context, that's just 1mm thicker and 5 grams heavier than the iPhone 15 Pro Max. In comparison, the Samsung Fold 6 is a chunky 12.1mm deep. When opened up, the V3 becomes just 4.35mm thick.

Despite its relatively diminutive form factor, the V3 feels really good in the hand. Honor has used premium, impact-resistant materials in the construction and the super-steel hinge is rated for 500,000 open and close cycles. It offers IPX8 water-resistance too, being submersible up to 2.5m for up to 30 minutes.

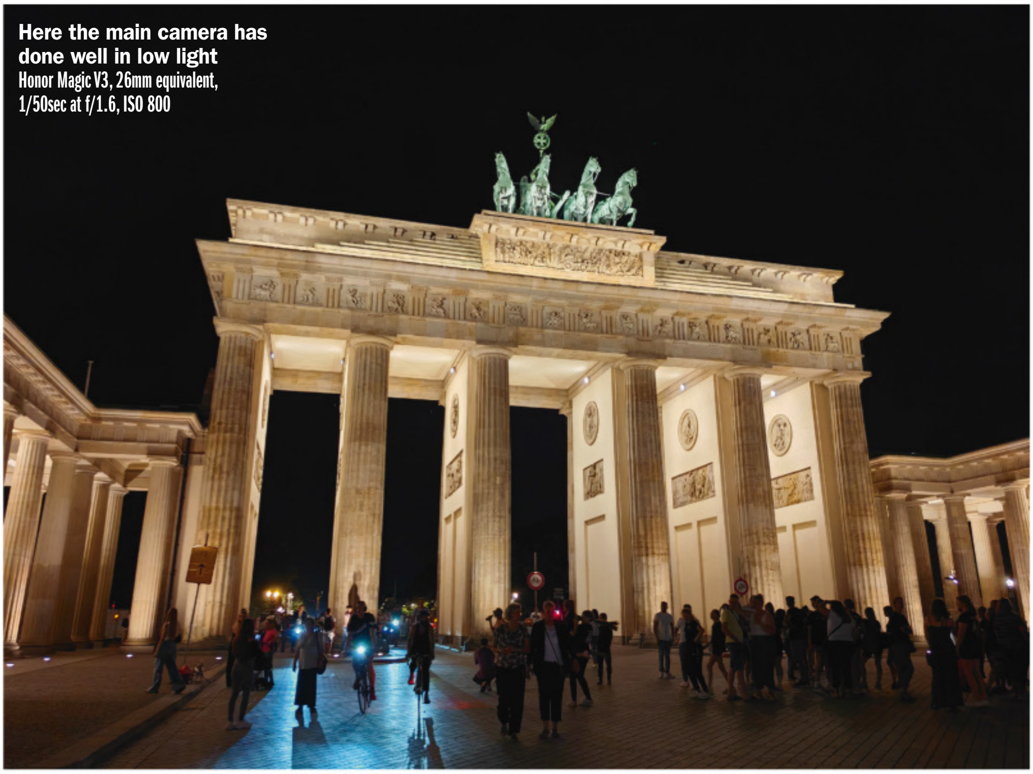
> 'With all of the rear cameras, and in every mode, you can either shoot with the phone folded, or you can open it out'

For extra protection, the green and black versions come with their own two-part case, in which the octagonal metal ring around the camera housing swings out on a hinge to become a built-in kickstand. On the reddish-brown version, which uses gold metal trim instead of black, this stand is built into the phone itself, rather than the case.

The Magic V3 is essentially a bar phone on the outside hiding a tablet on the inside. On one side, the cameras are arranged within a raised octagonal hump centred within the top third of the handset, instead of being in a row down the side like the Magic V2. I prefer this cluster layout, which is similar to the design of the recently launched Honor Magic 6. I find it easier to avoid covering one of the lenses with my finger.

On the other side is the outer cover screen, which is a full size, 6.3in OLED with an anti-scratch NanoCrystal shield. It boasts a 120Hz refresh rate and a class-leading 5,000nits of brightness. Opening it up reveals a double-width 7.92in AMOLED screen with an almost-square 10:9 aspect ratio, with a pixel density of 402ppi and 1,600nits brightness. Both screens offer stylus support.

One common criticism of foldables is the visible crease along the fold, which some users



Here the main camera has done well in low light Honor Magic V3, 26mm equivalent, 1/50sec at f/1.6, ISO 800

find distracting. The good news here is that the crease on the V3's screen is very shallow, and I found it to be barely noticeable when it's backlit in normal use.

The V3 is powered by the popular Snapdragon 8 Gen 3 chip, which is also used in many rival devices, and runs Android 14 and MagicOS 8. Despite the thin profile it boasts a battery with a capacity of 5150mAh, which is larger than some conventional flagship phones. It boasts fast 66W charging and 50W wireless charging, as well as 5W reverse charging, so you can use it to charge other devices, such as a smart watch.

The cameras

The 23mm (equivalent) main camera has a 50MP sensor with an f/1.6 maximum aperture. This is accompanied by a 50MP periscope-design 3.5x zoom telephoto lens with an f/3.0 maximum aperture, which equates to 90mm equivalent. The third camera in the trinity is a 40MP f/2.2 ultra-wide, equivalent to 16mm. Both the standard and tele cameras feature optical stabilisation. In addition, there are two identical 21mm f/2.2 selfie cameras, one on the inside screen and one on the cover screen.

One of the benefits of a folding camera phone is that, if you open it out, you can also shoot selfies using the main 50MP camera, if you like to see yourself in high resolution. This is useful for content creators. The front cover screen can also be switched on when you're behind the camera, so that the subject can monitor themselves when you're photographing or filming them.

The foldable design also means that the phone can stand up unsupported in both portrait and landscape orientation. This means that you can shoot long exposures or selfies without the need of a support, such as a tripod, which I found very useful.

Shot on the telephoto camera in Portrait mode, with the background blur set to strong. Honor Magic V3, 90mm, 1/100sec at f/3, ISO 50

Camera app

As expected, the camera interface offers the usual array of shooting modes plus a few extra ones. In the default Photo mode you get auto subject recognition, and optional tricks including a motion-sensing capture feature which takes a photo when it senses movement. Portrait mode offers a bokeh adjustment slider so you can set the level of background blur. Pro mode provides full control of settings including raw shooting.

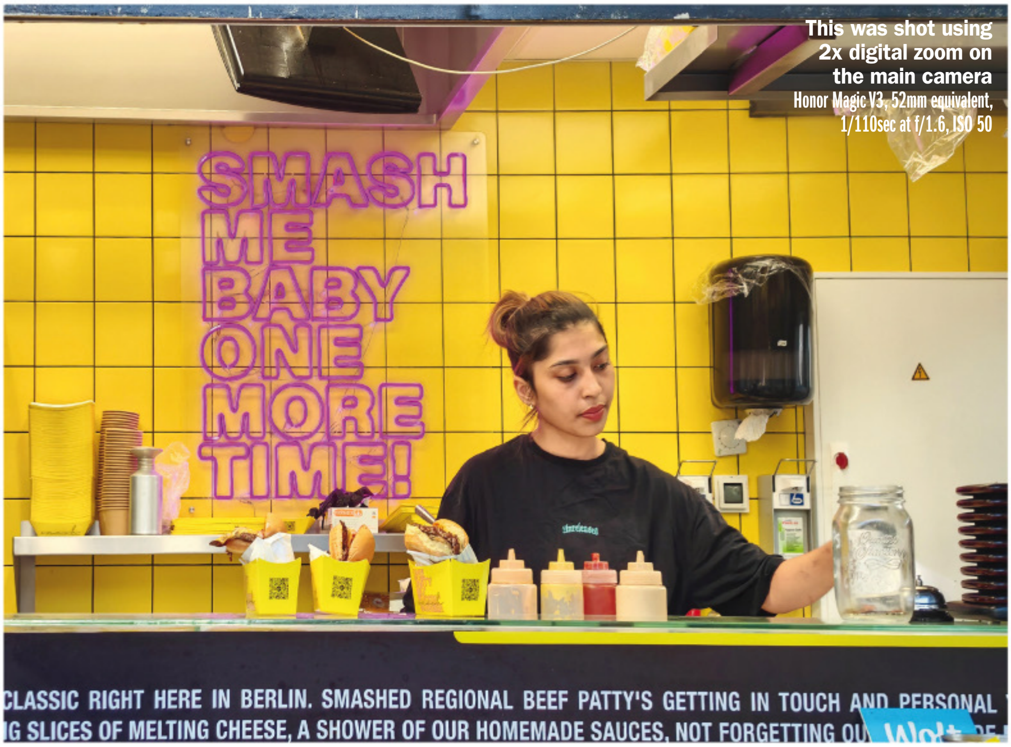
There is also the option of selecting Honor's Harcourt menu, a selection of three nice-looking profiles created in collaboration with the Harcourt Paris photo studio, including a striking mono profile. These don't work with the selfie cameras but, as already mentioned, the folding design means you can shoot selfies with the main cameras.

For the film-makers there's the standard Video mode, which can shoot at up to 4K 60fps and is vertical by default. You have to rotate the phone 90 degrees to shoot in landscape. There's also a separate 'movie' mode which promises a more cinematic experience and works in landscape orientation. This offers 10-bit LOG, and a variety of stylish LUT previews that you can add later in the edit.

With all of the rear cameras, and in every mode, you can either shoot with the phone folded, using the cover screen, or you can open it out and use that impressive double-width screen inside. I found that shooting with the screen open requires two-handed operation, but then I don't have especially long fingers. But the larger space gives more breathing room for the on-screen menu options and makes it easier to compose, tap to focus and examine the detail in your images. You can, if you prefer, choose the split-screen option, with the camera's view on the right-hand side of the screen and a film-strip of your most recently taken images on the left.

Image quality

By default, the Honor Magic V3 outputs 12.5MP images from the 50MP cameras and 10MP from the 40MP ultra-wide. But you can shoot in High-Res mode to get the full 50MP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This was shot using 2x digital zoom on the main camera
Honor Magic V3, 52mm equivalent, 1/110sec at f/1.6, ISO 50

resolution if and when you may need to make giant prints, though if you did this every time you'd soon fill up your storage. And it's unnecessary for the most part, because in the default camera modes the V3 delivers impressive images that gave me no indication that I was compromising on the camera by choosing a foldable. Whether shooting in the Natural, Vibrant or Authentic profiles, colours pop nicely without being gaudy or looking over-sharpened. The standard Photo mode offers automatic scene recognition and adjusts the shooting mode accordingly.

I found the autofocus on all three main cameras to be fast and decisive, and it usually picked the right focus point. Moving subjects in low light can be challenging, but I filmed concerts in very low and constantly changing lighting and had no issues with the focus or exposure, and I was pleasantly surprised by the results.

Portrait mode delivers nice portraits with a pleasing level of defocus (which you can adjust) and of course you have that telephoto lens available for a more flattering perspective. Some may find the level of default skin-softening to be a little heavy, but this can also be adjusted using the beauty slider, from zero to full Madame Tussauds.

There's a Super Macro mode, available under the More menu, which uses the ultra-wide camera and offers three preset levels of magnification. This enables you to get close enough to crop within a postage stamp, and the results are pretty sharp if you can hold it steady enough.

The V3 also offers a digital zoom up to 100x, and it produces acceptable images up to about 10x. But beyond that things start to deteriorate pretty quickly, so it's best avoided.

When it comes to photo editing, the Magic V3 supports some of Google's cloud-based AI party tricks such as the Magic Eraser, which allows you to remove people and objects from your photos simply by drawing a circle around them with your finger. It does a pretty good job, too. These features are not, of course, exclusive to Honor.

Video

Whether shooting in the default 4K 30fps mode or downsizing to a more storage-friendly Full HD, videos from the V3 setting are pleasing, with nice colours, and generally faultless exposure and white balance. The image stabilisation does an effective job in all modes, though walking while zoomed in is probably pushing it beyond its limits.

The addition of a more cinematic movie mode will be welcomed by filmmakers seeking higher quality and more control over the look and feel. The available LUTs vary from the subtle to the more extreme, and while serious cineastes will prefer to do their grading in post, they're fine for creating clips with, say, an instant moonlight look.

Data file

Main camera: 50MP, 23mm equivalent f/1.6, OIS
Telephoto camera: 50MP, 90mm equivalent f/3.0, OIS
Ultra-wide camera: 40MP, 16mm equivalent f/2.2
Selfie cameras: 2x 20MP f/2.2
Video: 4K 30fps, 1080p 30fps
Front screen: 6.3in OLED, 5,000nits
Main screen: 7.92in AMOLED, 1,800nits
Battery: 5150mAh
RAM: 12-16GB
Storage: 256GB / 512GB / 1TB
Operating system: Android 14, Magic OS 8.0
Dimensions: 156.6x74x 9.2mm (folded) 156.6x145.3x 4.4mm (unfolded)
Weight: 226g

Verdict

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★

FOLDABLE phones offer many benefits over bar phones, and the only real disadvantage, apart from the cost, is the extra bulk and weight. But Honor has largely eliminated this with the Magic V3 by making it so thin and light. For photographers and content creators it's hard not to be seduced by the ability to view and edit your shots on a tablet-sized screen, to use the cover screen as a preview monitor for your subject, to shoot selfies with the main 50MP camera, and to be able to open it to 90 degrees so that it stands up on its own, without the need for a tripod.

The Magic V3 takes these benefits and adds a camera system that can cover from 16mm ultra-wide to 90mm telephoto, optically, and deliver generally good photos and videos at all focal lengths, in all but the most trying of circumstances. There may well be better cameras available for less money on conventional phones. But the differences will be subtle and, in my opinion, the other benefits offered by the folding form factor more than make up for it.

The biggest negative is the price. £1,699 isn't cheap, but you do get a lot of phone for your money. And with four years of OS updates and five years of security updates thrown in, it should last you a good while before you need to upgrade.

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OTEX XT-801 gloves

Andy Westlake tries out some Australian-made photography gloves

- £43 (£54 including shipping) ● otexoutdoors.com.au

Specialist photography gloves may look like an overpriced luxury, when you can easily buy a pair of nice warm gloves on the high street for a fraction of the price. But if you shoot a lot in cold weather, they can make a huge difference to how easily and comfortably you can operate your camera. OTEX is an Australian company that's new to this market, with its first offering promising a compelling set of features at a keen price.

So what, exactly, do these gloves have to offer for photographers? Fundamentally, they aim to tick off everything you might need from a pair of gloves when out shooting in wintry weather. They're designed to be warm, waterproof and windproof, while incorporating fold-back tips for your index finger and thumb, so you can easily operate your camera's controls. Those fingertips are coated to work with touchscreens, too, while the palm and fingers are covered with a ridged rubber grip.

To achieve all this, the gloves employ a layered design. The outer shell is made of waterproof and windproof ripstop nylon, and there's a second waterproof liner too. Inside, you get insulation courtesy of 3M Thinsulate, rounded off by a fleece lining. A Velcro cuff secures them snugly in place.

In practice, these gloves deliver in their promises with very few drawbacks. I used them while out walking and shooting for a couple of hours in freezing temperatures of 0°C, and they kept my hands nice and warm. It's easy to fold the tips back when needed, and crucially they don't expose too much of your fingers to the chill. OTEX rates the gloves for temperatures down to -10° C, although in sub-zero conditions, I'd add a pair of liner gloves.

To test the waterproofing, I placed the gloves under a running tap, and they simply shrugged the water off, without any wetting at all. The touchscreen tips work, too, although they're inevitably a little imprecise. But they're fine for simple operations such as changing settings in your camera's onscreen quick menu – the key is to use the tip of the glove, not your own fingertip.

As for downsides, I'm not so sure there are any. Maybe I'd prefer the OTEX logo on the little finger to be a bit more subtle, but that's about all.

Verdict

I've used various kinds of photography gloves over the years, and I have to say that these are probably the best I've yet seen. They're every bit as good as my trusty Vallerret Markhof Pro V2s that I've been wearing for the past few years, and better in some respects, notably waterproofing and touchscreen operation. Overall, they do pretty much everything you could ask, and are attractively priced too.

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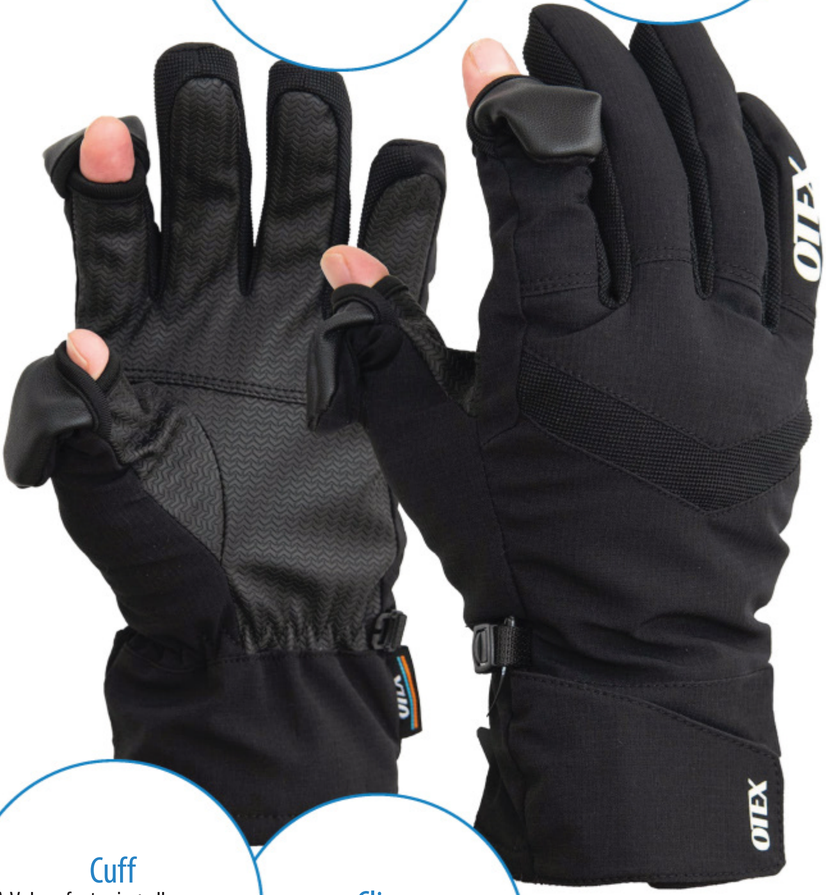


Grippy
The entire palm and inside of the fingers is covered with grippy rubber material.

Fold-back
Both the index finger and thumb have fold-back tips, which are secured by strong magnets.

Cuff
A Velcro fastening allows you to secure the gloves snugly for maximum warmth.

Clip
A small clip means you can keep the gloves together as a pair.

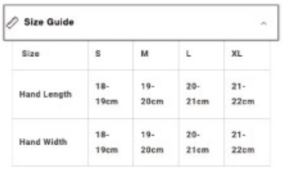
Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

At a glance

- Two-layer waterproof shell
- Insulated, fleece-lined inners
- Fold-back index finger and thumb tips
- Touchscreen compatible
- Available in four sizes

SIZING

The gloves come in four sizes – S, M, L and XL. A guide on OTEX's website helps you work out which one to order, based on the length and circumference of your hand. Based on this, I chose the M size and found it fitted my hands nice and snugly.



Size Guide

Size	S	M	L	XL
Hand Length	18-19cm	19-20cm	20-21cm	21-22cm
Hand Width	18-19cm	19-20cm	20-21cm	21-22cm

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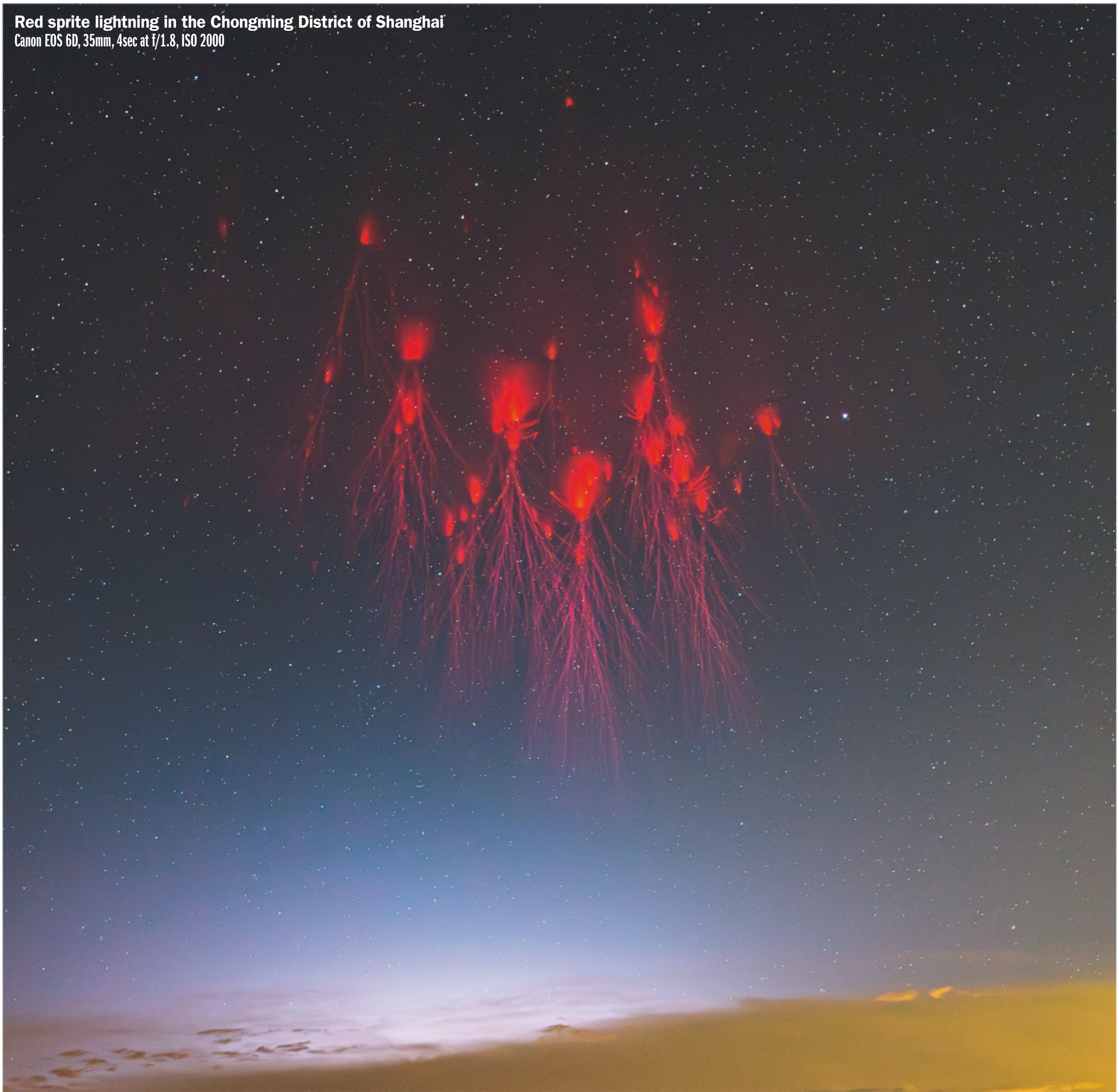
Embracing weather

Winners of the Standard Chartered Weather Photographer of the Year share their tips for success with **Hollie Latham Hucker**

Back in October, the Royal Meteorological Society announced the winners of the Standard Chartered Weather Photographer of the Year 2024 competition, and we saw some breathtaking images. One particular image proved very popular and took our social media channel by storm – it was 'Sprites Dancing in the Dark Night' taken by title prize winner, Wang Xin from Shanghai, China. As multiple thunderstorms raged around Shanghai, Xin travelled to the Chongming District and after a few hours, a 'faint red figure' flashed in their eyes and this remarkable image was captured. The judges, an international panel of



Red sprite lightning in the Chongming District of Shanghai
Canon EOS 6D, 35mm, 4sec at f/1.8, ISO 2000

experts from the fields of meteorology, photography and journalism, including members of the ITV Weather team, commented that it is rare to see an image with this extent and number of sprites.

Standard Chartered Weather Photographer of the Year showcases the very best in weather and climate photography, with a grand title prize of £5,000 and more prizes for the Standard Chartered Young Weather Photographer of the Year 2024 and Standard Chartered Smartphone Weather Photographer of the Year 2024 categories.

The Standard Chartered Young Weather Photographer of the Year title goes to Angelina Widmann of Bregenz, Austria, whose winning photo 'Rain Aria' captured a stunning shot during an open-air performance of Madame Butterfly on the eastern shore of Bodensee (also known as Lake Constance) in Bregenz, Austria.

The Standard Chartered Smartphone Weather Photographer of the Year winner is Nur Syaireen Natasya Binti Azaharin from Selangor, Malaysia, who had gone out with the expectation of capturing a sunrise but was instead rewarded with this glorious view of smoking volcanoes in East Java, Indonesia.

New to this year's competition is the Standard Chartered Climate Award, created to underscore the connection between weather patterns and the broader impacts of climate change. The winner of the first Standard Chartered Climate Award is Gerson Turelly of Brazil, for the photograph 'Rowing'. Gerson is also the winner of the Public Favourite vote. The image depicts the centre of Porto Alegre, Brazil, during the devastating Rio Grande do Sul floods in spring 2024.

To see more of the excellent images that were entered into the 2024 competition and to find out how you can enter the 2025 competition, simply visit rmets.org/weather-photographer-of-the-year

Sprites Dancing in the Dark Night by Wang Xin, Shanghai, China

The Standard Chartered Weather Photographer of the Year 2024 Winner

Instagram: @a18917431985wx

Photographer Wang Xin had to be extremely patient to capture this magnificent example of red sprite lightning in the Chongming District of Shanghai. Much like the ethereal, fairy-like sprites of folklore, red sprites are particularly difficult to see or photograph. The judging panel commented that it is rare to see an image with this extent and number of sprites.

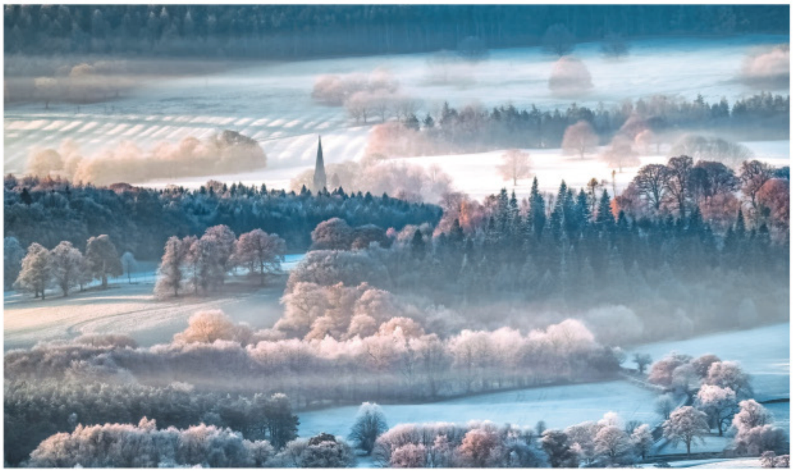
As multiple thunderstorms raged around Shanghai, Xin travelled to the Chongming District and adopted a trial-and-error approach by setting up the camera and waiting. After a few hours, a 'faint red figure' flashed in front of Xin's eyes and this remarkable image was captured. The elusive sprites only last a few milliseconds, so Xin used a four-second exposure to achieve this photo. Sprites occur due to electrical discharge, but unlike ordinary lightning, they occur well above cumulonimbus clouds, approximately 50 miles (80km) above the ground, in a layer of the atmosphere known as the mesosphere. Due to their fleeting nature, sprites are still not well understood, but they have been observed to occur after a strong, positive lightning bolt between the cloud and ground. The red colour comes from changes in the energy of the electrons of nitrogen atoms high in the atmosphere.

XIN'S TOP TIPS

1 The more extreme the weather, the more stunning the photos can be. A successful photo can't be achieved without accumulated experience and preparation. You should also pay attention to your own safety, which is the first priority.

2 Don't miss the strong thunderstorms (there are usually a lot of them in spring and summer); they have more chances to produce red sprites. Don't be upset if you can't get it straight away, as I had to go through a lot of failures to get this winning photo.

3 When photographing red sprites, focus your camera on the stars to get a clear picture. And avoid the light pollution in the city and the full moon, as they will both impact visibility.



A spectacular display of hoar frost over the Derwent Valley, Peak District, Derbyshire. Sony A7R III, 100-400mm

Hoarfrost Heaven by Andy Gray, Matlock, UK

Main Title 2nd Place

Instagram: @andygrayphotographer

Photographer Andy Gray was especially pleased to have captured this image of hoar frost over the Derwent Valley as he feels hoar frost has become rarer in the Peak District. In Old English, the word 'hoar' is related to old-age, and so this frost gets its name from its resemblance to white hair. Hoar frost differs from ground frost because it occurs when the surface is already below freezing. The water vapour immediately freezes on contact with the object rather than first condensing as liquid water and then freezing.

The image was taken during a period of high pressure which led to particularly cold weather. Within high pressure systems (or anticyclones), air is generally sinking which leads to cloudless skies. At night, the lack of clouds means that more heat is lost to space, rather than being reflected to the Earth's surface. Winter nights can become very cold, encouraging the formation of frost and mist which can last well after the sun has risen.

ANDY'S TOP TIPS

1 Get to know your location's geography. This will determine common weather characteristics that frequently occur. For example winter inversions are frequent along this stretch of valley. Mist will often occur on cold mornings above lakes and reservoirs.

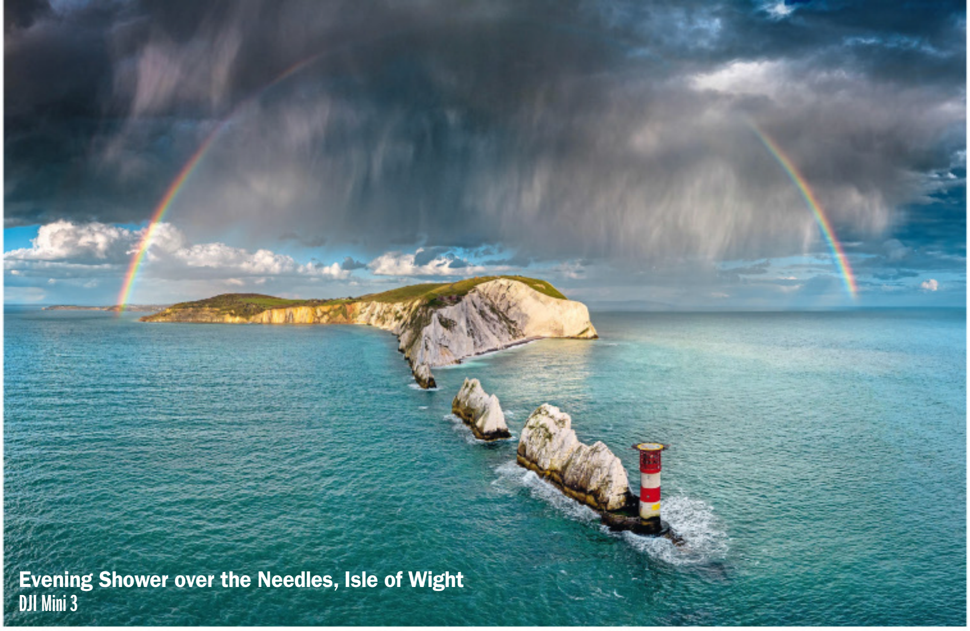
2 Plan your visit according to the weather forecast. Use Weather apps such as Windy or Clear Outside. These are a good guide but not always 100% accurate.

3 I always carry a portable sturdy umbrella, microfibre cloths, a lens hood, shower cape, hat, thermal gloves and head-torch to cover all eventualities. Plus spare camera batteries and SD cards.

Evening Shower Over the Needles by Jamie Russell, Isle of Wight, UK

Main Title 3rd Place

Instagram @Island_visions_photography

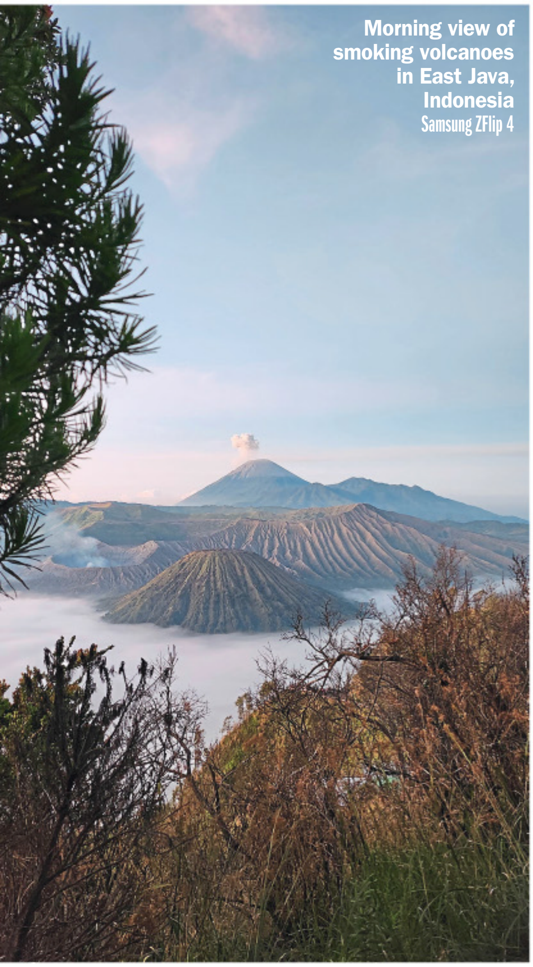


Evening Shower over the Needles, Isle of Wight
DJI Mini 3

Photographer Jamie Russell took advantage of sea and air to capture this image: 'Some large showers started developing 20 miles or so to our north-northwest. Realising they could cross The Needles with rainbow potential, we jumped in our rib at Colwell Bay and positioned ourselves with the camera. However, the composition was awkward, and the choppy sea was a challenge, so I sent up the drone, knowing the view would likely be a lot more impressive.' His instinct certainly paid off as he managed to capture two British icons: the white chalk stacks of The Needles and a downpour! To top this image off, the Isle of Wight is perfectly crowned with a rainbow.

Although rainbows are a common optical phenomenon, the correct ingredients need to come together to see one. Firstly, the sun must be behind you, and it must be low in the sky. Secondly, an array of airborne water droplets must be ahead of you. When light travels through a water droplet, it slows down and changes direction because a water droplet is denser than air—this is known as refraction. The amount that light is refracted depends on its colour, which is why sunlight (consisting of a mix of all colours) is split into the rainbow spectrum when it is refracted. This spreading of the light into the different colours is called dispersion. When the light reaches the back of the water droplet, it is reflected and passes back through the droplet, again being refracted and further dispersed as it leaves the droplet.

As with all optical phenomena, rainbows are completely unique to the observer, so no two people will have ever seen the exact same rainbow (unless someone like Jamie has been on hand to document it!).



Morning view of smoking volcanoes in East Java, Indonesia
Samsung ZFlip 4

Volcanoes by Nur Syaireen Natasya Binti Azaharin, Malaysia

Standard Chartered Smartphone Weather Photographer of the Year 2024

Instagram @nr.s.n

Photographer Nur Syaireen Natasya Binti Azaharin had gone out with the expectation of capturing a sunrise but was instead rewarded with this glorious view of smoking volcanoes in East Java, Indonesia. Sitting above the low-level stratus clouds, she was afforded a tranquil view of the peaks in the early morning light and snapped the scene with her Samsung Galaxy Z Flip4.

A small pyrocumulus cloud (also known as flammagenitus) sits atop Mount Semeru (central peak in the background) and small plumes of smoke and steam are emitted from the crater of Mount Bromo (front left). Pyrocumulus clouds not only form above volcanoes, but above heat sources such as forest fires and power station cooling towers which cause air to rise. Moisture in the air will condense to form a cloud once the air has risen to a cool enough altitude.

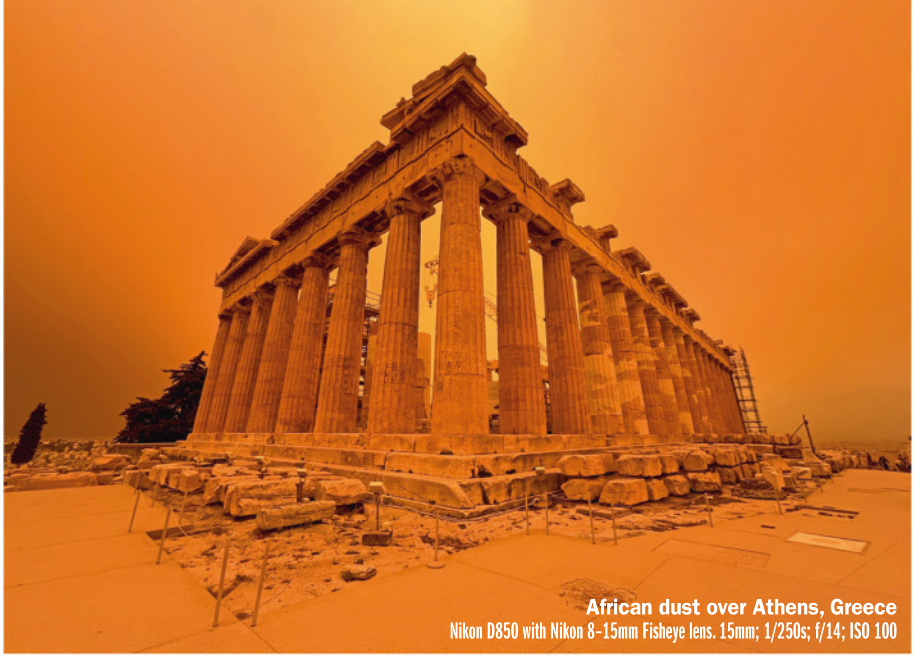
Volcanoes emit small particles into the air which provide additional surfaces onto which the water vapour can condense. Therefore, pyrocumulus clouds can appear more dense than other clouds, being formed of many small droplets. If the heat source is large enough, deep rising currents of air may form, allowing the pyrocumulus to evolve into a pyrocumulonimbus which, like a cumulonimbus cloud, may be associated with thunder and lightning.

NUR SYAIREEN'S TOP TIPS:

1 Smartphones excel in golden and blue hours, where light dramatically transforms a scene. For this shot the soft glow emphasised the raw elements. Use HDR or night modes to balance shadows and highlights and position the light source strategically to enhance textures unique to the weather conditions.

2 Rain, mist, or storms may seem intimidating, but they offer unique textures and moods. For instance, raindrops on your lens can create an artistic blur effect. Protect your phone with a simple waterproof cover, and experiment with different angles to use these elements to your advantage.

3 Every weather moment tells a story. Look for elements that interact with the sky, like trees swaying in the wind or clouds framing a volcano. Compose to align horizons or use reflections to create symmetry. Simplicity often speaks volumes, so focus on a singular subject against the vastness of nature.



African dust over Athens, Greece

Nikon D850 with Nikon 8-15mm Fisheye lens. 15mm; 1/250s; f/14; ISO 100

African Dust Over Athens by Lesley Hellgeth, United States

2nd Place, Standard Chartered Smartphone Weather Photographer of the Year

Instagram: @lmsmith2

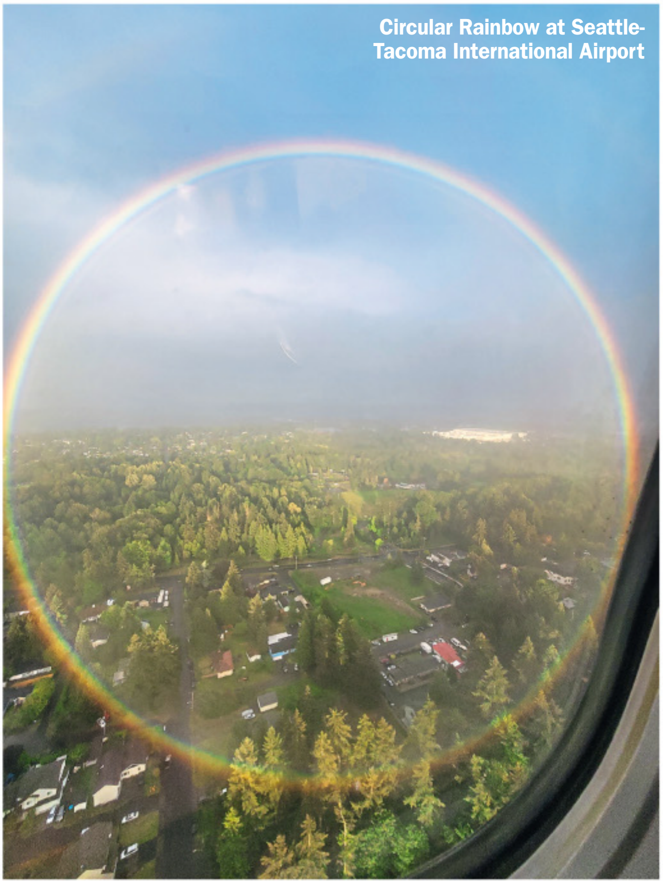
You might be forgiven for thinking that the Parthenon has been magically transported to Mars, but this scene is actually much more down to Earth! This image shows the influence of Saharan dust on Athens during April 2023 and is a reminder of the interconnectivity of weather conditions around the world, an aspect that particularly impressed the judges.

An area of low pressure over Libya created strong southerly winds that transported the dust from northern Africa to Greece. Hot air from the Sahara also surged northwards, with the high temperatures adding to the unpleasant environment. The warm southerly winds also contributed to a much earlier start to the fire season in southern Greece. Although the April Saharan dust outbreak was particularly severe, there had been several other outbreaks across southern Europe in the preceding months. Looking at trends over the past few decades, there is evidence that the number, intensity and length of these outbreaks are increasing. Temperature increases in the Mediterranean and persistent drought in northwest Africa are among the reasons for an increase in dust outbreaks.

LESLEY'S TOP TIPS:

1 Embrace the weather you get. I had been hoping to photograph the Parthenon at golden hour and was initially disappointed that the sandstorm was interfering with my plan. Once I realised I was experiencing something far more unique than a sunset, I seized the opportunity to capture it.

2 Consider the timing of crowds and natural light. A few people on social media have questioned how I captured the Parthenon – an often-crowded location with no people in the shot. From research I knew it would be less crowded towards the end of the day (and the light would be good). It was just a case of waiting while other people posed for their own photos and being ready to snap a photo as soon as they moved out of the way.



Circular Rainbow at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport

Circular Rainbow by Peter Reinold, Kent United States

3rd Place, Standard Chartered Smartphone Weather Photographer of the Year

Instagram: @peter_reinold

Photographer Peter Reinold held his camera phone steady through a turbulent landing at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport to capture this complete circular rainbow. He said, 'I always pick the window seat on planes, as you never know what you [might] encounter. It paid off this time.'

A rainbow's shape is actually a circle centred on the point directly opposite the sun from you, but most of the time we can't see the full circle because the ground gets in the way. If you can get to a higher vantage point with water droplets below, you are more likely to see the complete rainbow. While a plane is an obvious location, sometimes you can also see circular rainbows from the top of tall buildings.

PETER'S TOP TIPS:

1 When capturing weather, look for an interesting foreground and scenery. For example, a barn or a tree could enhance the photo or show the storm clouds passing over rolling hills. Use the rule of thirds or shoot during Golden Hour.

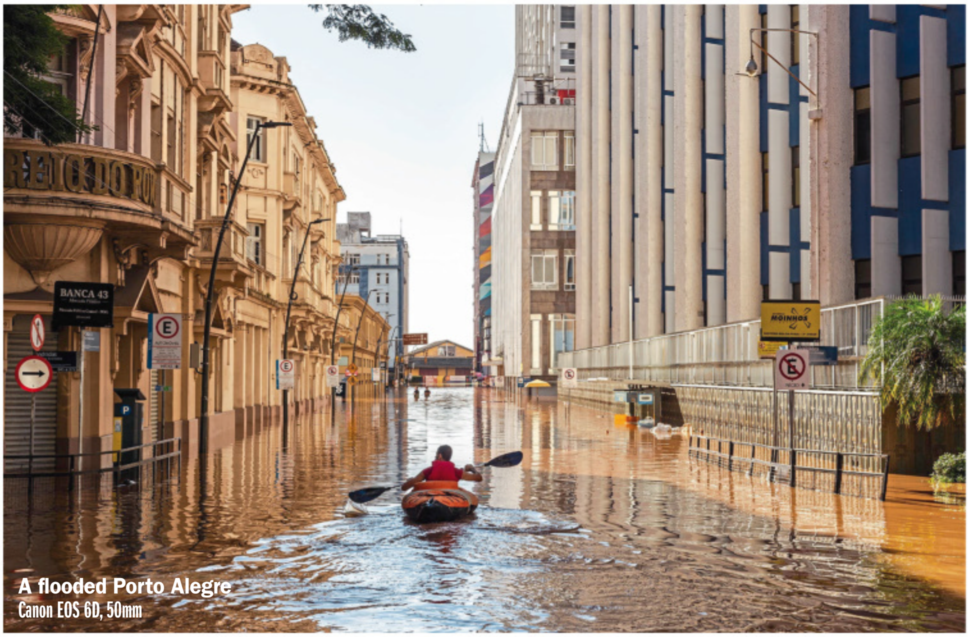
2 Understand your camera and gear. Great photos can be taken on any device, you don't need a fancy camera. If shooting on your smartphone, check if you can shoot in RAW or DNG files for better post processing. Avoid using digital zoom if there is no built-in optical zoom, you can zoom/crop later. Be familiar with your gear, it should be an extension of your hand.

3 Always have a plan when going out shooting the weather. Depending on what you are shooting, understand the conditions and have a way out planned. Avoid getting caught out by unexpected weather conditions. The best picture is not worth getting hurt for.

Rowing by Gerson Turelly, Brazil

Winner, Standard Chartered Climate Award 2024

Instagram: @turellystreetphoto and @gersonturelly



A flooded Porto Alegre
Canon EOS 6D, 50mm

Captured by local photographer Gerson Turelly, this image shows the centre of Porto Alegre, Brazil, during the devastating Rio Grande do Sul floods in Spring 2024. In this image, a road has turned into a waterway down which a young man paddles his kayak. Gerson notes that the kayaker was headed towards the worst affected areas to help rescue stranded people.

The composition and lighting of the photo were praised by the judging panel, as well as the powerful combination of weather and climate impacts portrayed in the scene. Judges commented how the picture shows 'past, present and future'; flooding has always been something that we must deal with and adapt to, however as climate change increases the intensity of heavy rainfall, flooding will become even more common.

Looking at the most intense ten-day period during this event, World Weather Attribution showed that climate change made the flooding at least twice as likely, and six to nine per cent more intense. The El Niño Southern Oscillation was also shown to play a large role in increasing the likelihood and intensity of this event, demonstrating how natural variability of the ocean and atmosphere can combine with climate change to produce particularly extreme events.

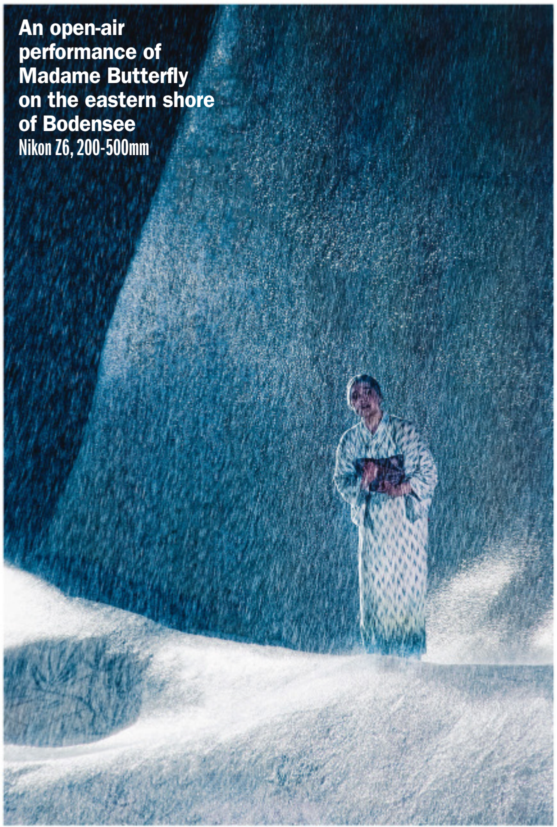
Until this event, Porto Alegre had generally been spared from significant flooding, meaning that maintenance of its flood defences had been neglected. Urban sprawl into flood-prone areas had also increased vulnerability. This event acts as a reminder that, under climate change, extreme events will occur in new places or with greater intensity or higher frequency than before.

GERSON'S TOP TIPS

1 Photographing a scene that has to do with the weather will always be challenging. In most cases, there will be some difficult technical issues to resolve.

2 Cultivate patience to wait for the right moment to take the photo as well as train your reflexes to be able to respond immediately to a scene that will only last a few moments.

3 Study the climate, its general concepts and current news related to it as well as its rarer phenomena. This way, you will understand and know how to properly value an important climactic scene when you are in front of it, composing a good photo and telling a good story.



An open-air performance of Madame Butterfly on the eastern shore of Bodensee
Nikon Z6, 200-500mm

Rain Aria by Angelina Widmann, Bregenz, Austria

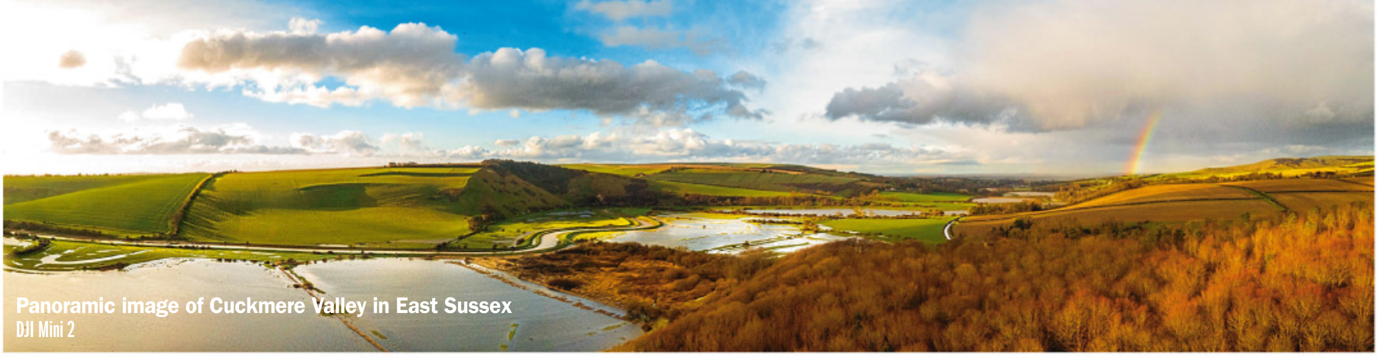
The Standard Chartered Young Weather Photographer of the Year 2024

Instagram: @angewidmann_

Young photographer Angelina Widmann captured this stunning shot during an open-air performance of *Madame Butterfly* on the eastern shore of Bodensee (also known as Lake Constance) in Bregenz, Austria. Angelina noted how 'the rain made the plot even more dramatic'. This photo was taken with a telephoto lens due to the distance between Angelina and the stage. She used a short exposure to capture the falling drops, before sprinting to safety to avoid damaging her camera!

Bregenz is one of the wettest spots around Bodensee, due to its proximity to the mountains, receiving over 1600mm of rainfall per year. Perhaps this explains why the opera singers bravely continued their performances, even as the audience fled the arena in the sudden downpour! In the summer, monthly rainfall amounts can reach 200mm in Bregenz, most likely associated with summertime convection enhanced by moist air from the lake being lifted by the mountainous terrain.

As the atmosphere warms due to greenhouse gas emissions, the amount of water vapour in the air also increases. Additional water vapour means that when it rains, it pours. A change to more intense rainfall has already been observed in Europe and across the world. Although infrequent, such downpours can disrupt leisure activities, as well as transport, infrastructure and industry, so accurate forecasting of extreme rainfall will become increasingly important as our climate changes.



Panoramic image of Cuckmere Valley in East Sussex
DJI Mini 2

Saturated Earth and Sky's Promise by Ellis Skelton, Eastbourne, UK

2nd Place, The Standard Chartered Young Weather Photographer of the Year 2024

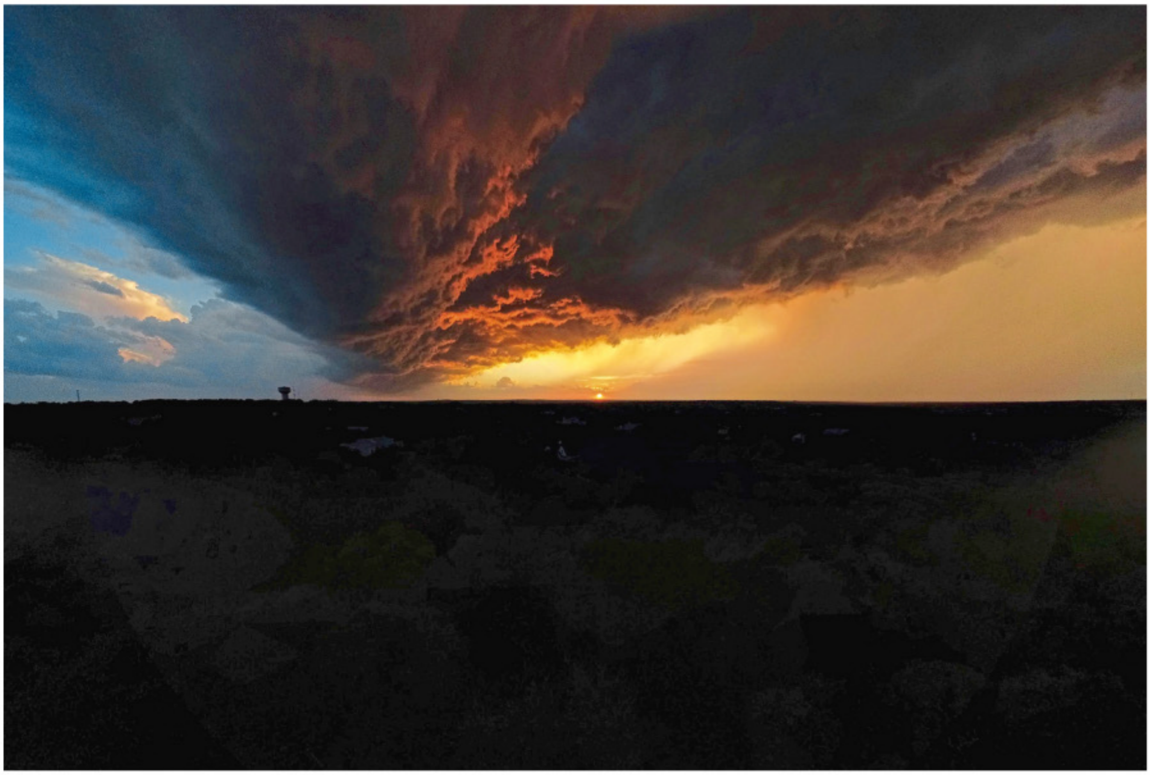
Instagram: @ellis_skelton_photography

Young photographer Ellis Skelton eloquently describes his panoramic image of Cuckmere Valley in East Sussex: 'The expansive horizon of the river Cuckmere spans across the picturesque landscape and the harmonious blend of earth and sky merge capturing natural tranquillity and wonder within the landscape. Captured from above, this breathtaking panorama shows how powerful the weather can be.'

The judging panel noted how the photograph seems to contain two seasons: summer on the left and autumn on the right. The beauty of the sky contrasted with the flooding on the ground is a reminder of both the wonder and misery the sky can bring.

Sea levels are predicted to rise along the Sussex coastline, potentially by over a metre by the end of this century. And as the Cuckmere River flows into the English Channel, those sea-level rises increase the likelihood of flooding in the Cuckmere Valley.

The flood risk increases further thanks to changing river management techniques over the course of several centuries which have led to a build-up of shingle at the river mouth. There are fears that flooding could become the norm even sooner, as a Coastal Risk Screening Tool by Climate Central suggests that the annual flood level will cover most of the Cuckmere Valley by 2030.



A thunderstorm rolling in, Austin, Texas DJI Mini 2

Fire and Ice by Lincoln Wheelwright, Austin, Texas, United States

3rd Place, Standard Chartered Young Weather Photographer of the Year 2024

As a thunderstorm began rolling in, young photographer Lincoln Wheelwright grabbed his camera and took this picture from his house in Austin, Texas. The judging panel were particularly impressed with the split colours: the blue to the left of the cloud and the orange to the right. Lincoln explains how 'the clouds were low enough that they blocked the light on the other side. This gave the effect of the fiery sunset versus the cold sky.'

Thunderstorms frequently strike late afternoon or early evening, as it tends to be the warmest and most humid time of day. Warm and moist air at the surface creates an unstable atmosphere, forming a deep cumulonimbus or thundercloud once air starts to rise. In some cases, the atmosphere becomes so unstable that the air rises without an outside trigger, but sometimes air lifted over a mountain or over a cooler, denser airmass triggers the storm.

Texas has an abundant supply of warm, moist air, thanks to the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico to the south. The Gulf of Mexico is warming rapidly due to climate change, boosting the supply of moist air and raising the potential of intense storms in the region.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Repository for posterity

I'm a long-time amateur photographer, recording landscapes and family life, and it has provided great joy as a hobby. I have shared the memories with my children, making a book and archive for each. However, I think about my 80-100,000 general photographs and wonder just what I might do with them.

I have recorded UK landscapes and travel photos for around 50 years and as I reach the latter stages of my life, I'd be keen to know if there is a repository for them that may serve some use, perhaps having open source to academic or social documentary purposes in the future. It would give me some comfort that the images that I created, cared for and kept can be useful. Are you or your readers able to advise on any options for me?

Eddie Boyd

I would imagine that your images that include people, cars, buildings and other signs of human activity would be of most historical interest because these change over time – unlike scenic landscapes, which tend not to. I'm not aware of a national archive but if there is one, I'm sure our readers will know about it. Otherwise perhaps your local museum or historical society may know of such a repository in your area.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS A SAMSUNG 256GB PRO PLUS MICRO SDXC CARD. NOTE: PRIZE APPLIES TO UK AND EU RESIDENTS ONLY

Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0

Elements 2.0

Lost customer

Like Christopher Sams, I'd been using Elements 12 with no issues until I bought a new computer and experienced the same problem when I tried to install it i.e. declaring my activation number invalid. Digging through my cupboards I found an Installation CD for Elements 2 so I installed that. It does everything Elements 12 did, albeit with a less user-friendly interface, except raw processing. Affinity Photo 2 was on special offer for £36 so I bought that too. Nice one, Adobe.

Alan Kirkby

The case for mirrorless

John Bridges ponders whether camera makers have shot themselves in the foot in their move to mirrorless. Yes, DSLR batteries last longer; yes, lens decisions are now more complex and/or expensive; and yes, most people do not need the technological benefits of expensive mirrorless cameras.

But I believe the move to mirrorless has significantly improved choice for photographers today. It has enabled much superior hybrid cameras, an important consideration for today's content creators who use both stills and video; the lenses produce generally higher-quality images and the profit margins are greater for the manufacturers, enabling them not only to stay in business but also to fund future developments.

Also, John's point about price applies only to new cameras. The second-hand market for mirrorless cameras is a buoyant source of more reasonably-priced models, as many advertisers in AP are only too keen to point out!

Steve Walker

Horses for courses

I can't believe how terrible the results of my 25MP Nikon D5300 have suddenly become since the advent of the 40MP full-frame mirrorless cameras. I am of course being sarcastic. Mirrorless cameras are excellent, but when I added a Fujifilm X-T50 with a couple of prime lenses (25mm and 16mm) to my gadget bag I felt that the price I'd get for the Nikon system I've acquired over the years wasn't enough to warrant getting rid of it. So I kept it, not as a backup to the X-T50 but as a different tool for a different job.

When wandering around on a city break I want to be able to put the camera in my pocket so I use the smaller mirrorless; but I'm not going to buy a long lens for it so for wildlife photography I'll stick to the Nikon.

As consumers we should not be pressured into thinking that our older kit is now obsolete and therefore feel forced to upgrade.

Simon Elson

FUJIFILM
X-T50

Simon sees benefits to his X-T50 as well as with his Nikon DSLR

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

Do you use any photo editing apps on your smartphone? And which ones?

You said...

David Holmes Google works fine if one knows how to use it.

Lucrezia Herman Snapseed, Hipstamatic, SKRWT/4PNTS/MRRW, Slow Shutter. Never use pre-sets in the first two, but have developed my own layers/combos.

Sarah Swan Photoshop Express, and sometimes Snapseed.

Steve Walker I have a Samsung Galaxy, and the Gallery app has a very useful and quite powerful editing app. I used to use Snapseed, but haven't needed it for a while now.

Mike Weaver Lightroom and Snapseed… I tend to use Snapseed for quick on-the-run edits to get a shot posted on social media there and then.

Z70 Photography @z70photo I use the Lightroom app as I have a Creative Cloud subscription, but only for quick edits on the move.

Martin @_SmartUK Nothing but @YouDoodleApp.

Zick_Zack_31_03 @Jaq_031 Of course, the one and only Lightroom mobile.

Cara Riley No. I prefer a non-phone camera for photos that get edited. The photos I take on my phone are not the kind I would edit.

Paul Pearse Snapseed, very good, simple, easy to undo edits and lets you keep original.

Deno Joker I use Adobe Photoshop express, Airbrush and Picsart.

Steve Hostetler @T4R99Nikon None.

Stuart Neville Lightroom on my phone and iPad – coupled with the desktop version and Photoshop, the £9.98 subscription is fantastic value.

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Our favourite photos posted by readers on our social media channels this week

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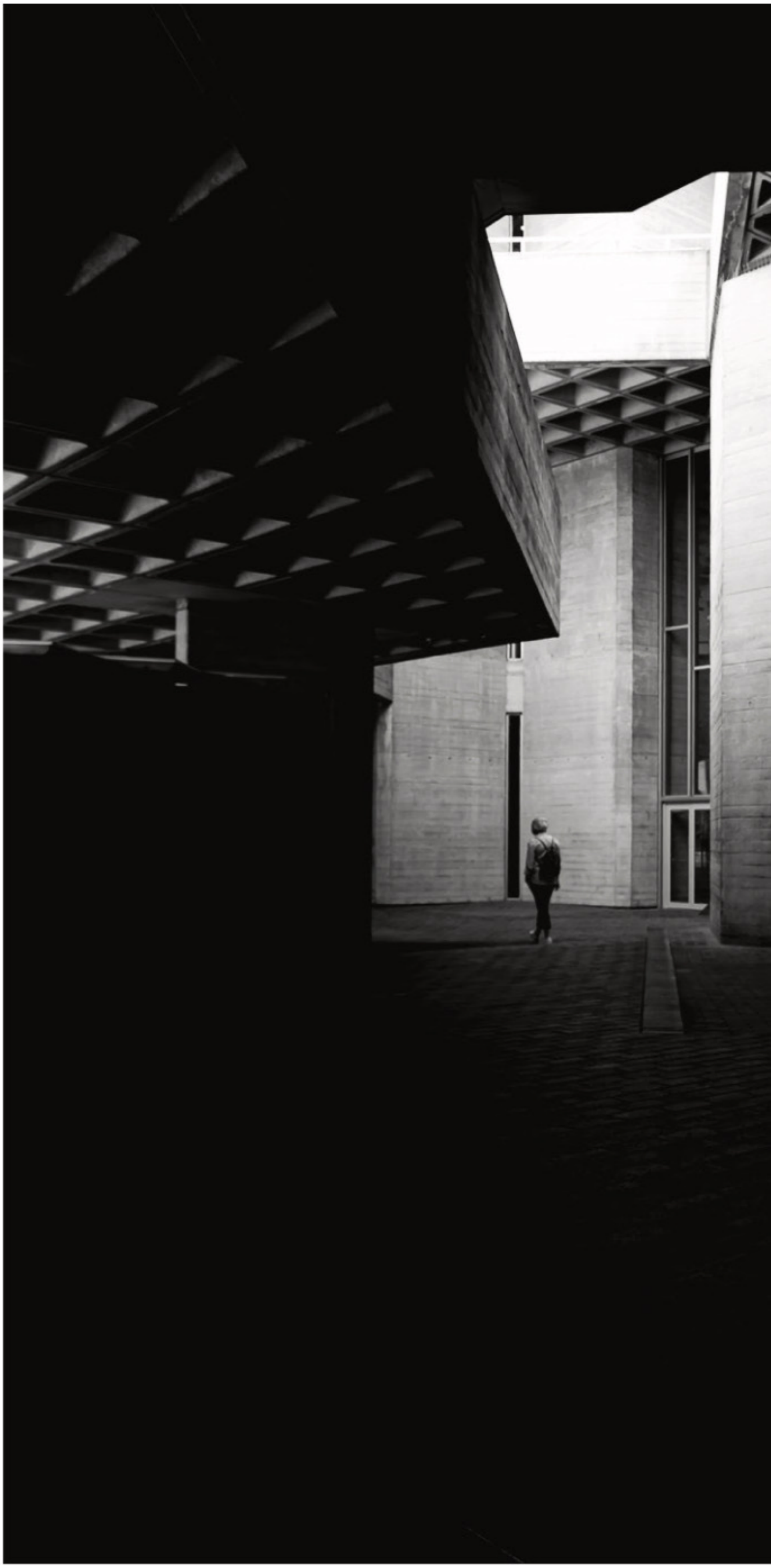
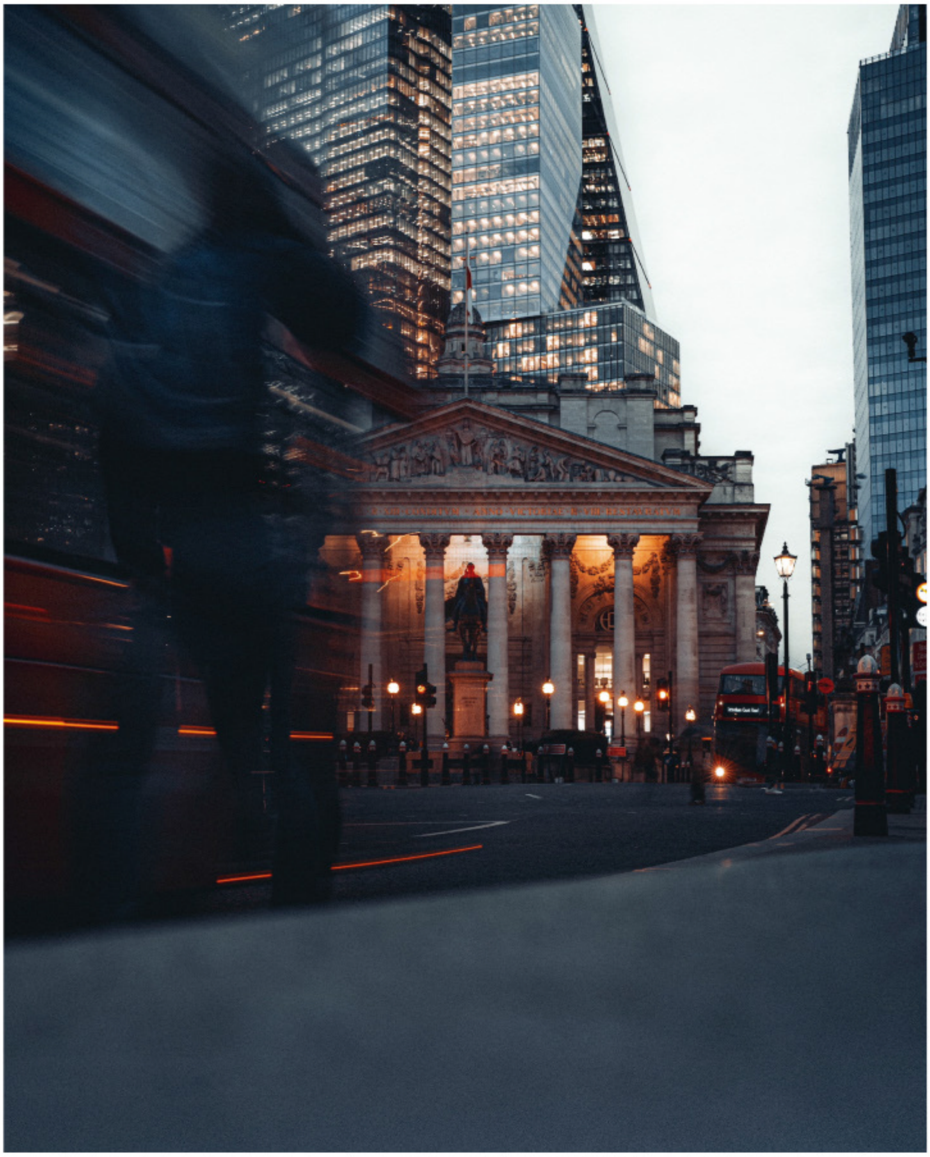
Solitude in the Shadows
by Dobrota Viorel-Daniel

Canon EOS 70D, Canon 17-55mm, 1/80sec at f/4, ISO 100

'We are living in a world where we are surrounded by big buildings, and we live in shadows and solitude. I have a big passion for this approach of photography, architecture with bold angles and the dramatic light is the perfect harmony of structure and stillness. I like simplicity and the light to tell its own story.'
Instagram: @danieldobrot





Night's creeping in on the city

by Dony Gilles

Sony A7III, Sony 50mm F1.2 GM, 0.5sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

'A ghost drifts through London's Bank district, where old meets new. The lights are glowing, even though it's not fully dark yet. That perfect in-between time, right before night takes over. The warm glow cuts through the chilly winter air. I was there at just the right time.'

Instagram: @Creativebydny

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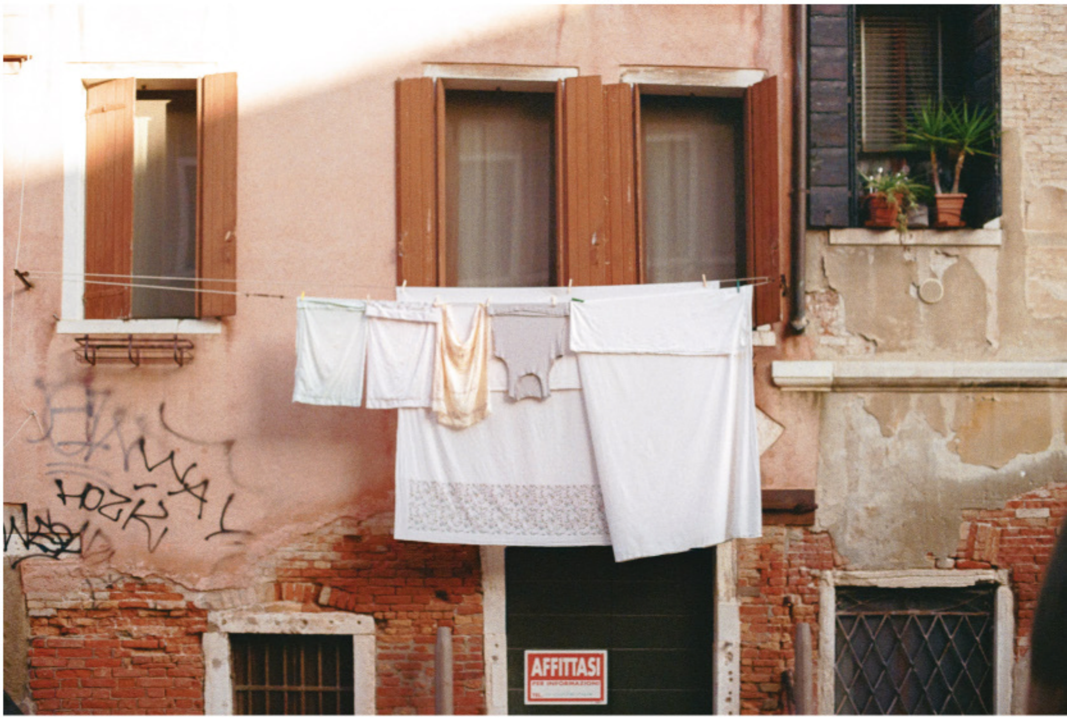
Bucato Steso (Hanging Laundry) by Ana Espinosa

Canon AE-1 Program, Canon FD 50mm f/1.4, Kodak Gold 200

'After an early morning stroll around Venice landmarks, I ventured into the little back canals of the city and discovered this beautiful everyday scene. The composition was perfect: carefully hung laundry from a time-worn building. It couldn't get any more authentic than that!'
Social media: @laturranalogica



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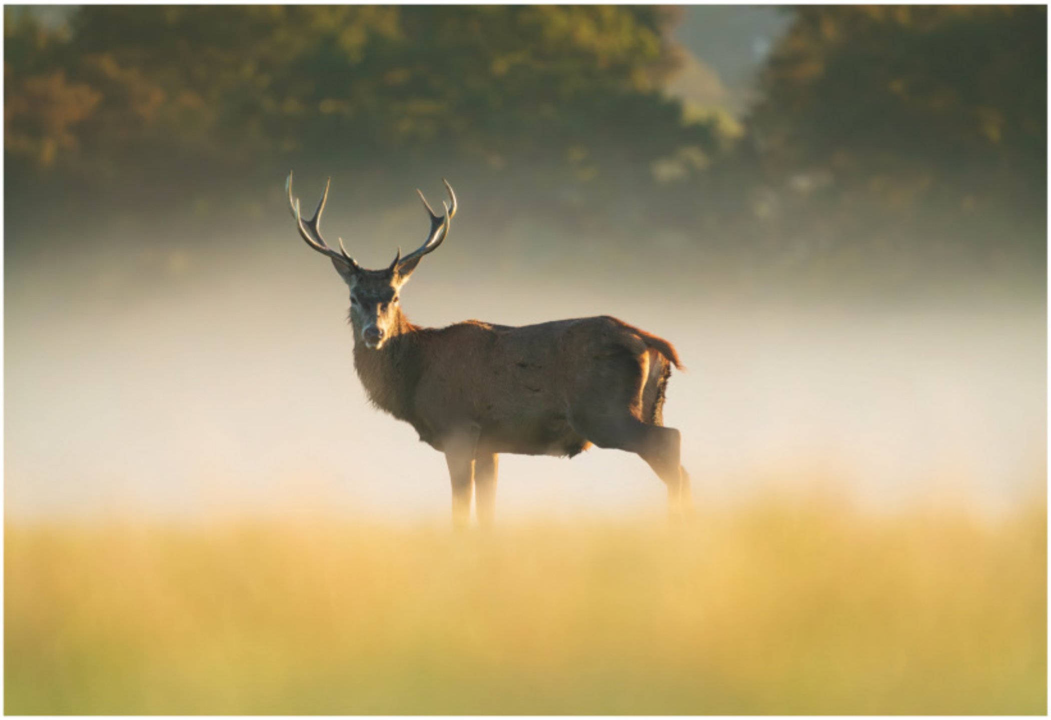

Staggering Gaze by Filipe Martins

Sony A7R II, Sony 200-600mm, 1/2000sec at f/8, ISO 2500, 600mm

'The photo captures a majestic stag standing tall in Richmond Park, its intense gaze fixed directly towards the camera. Bathed in the soft, golden light of a cold, crisp sunrise, the scene exudes a serene yet powerful aura, with frost-kissed grass and mist lingering in the background.'
Instagram: @iamfilipemartins

Want to see your pictures here? Simply share them with our Flickr, Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook communities using the hashtag #appicoftheweek. Or you can email your best shot to us at **ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk**. See page 3 for how to find us.

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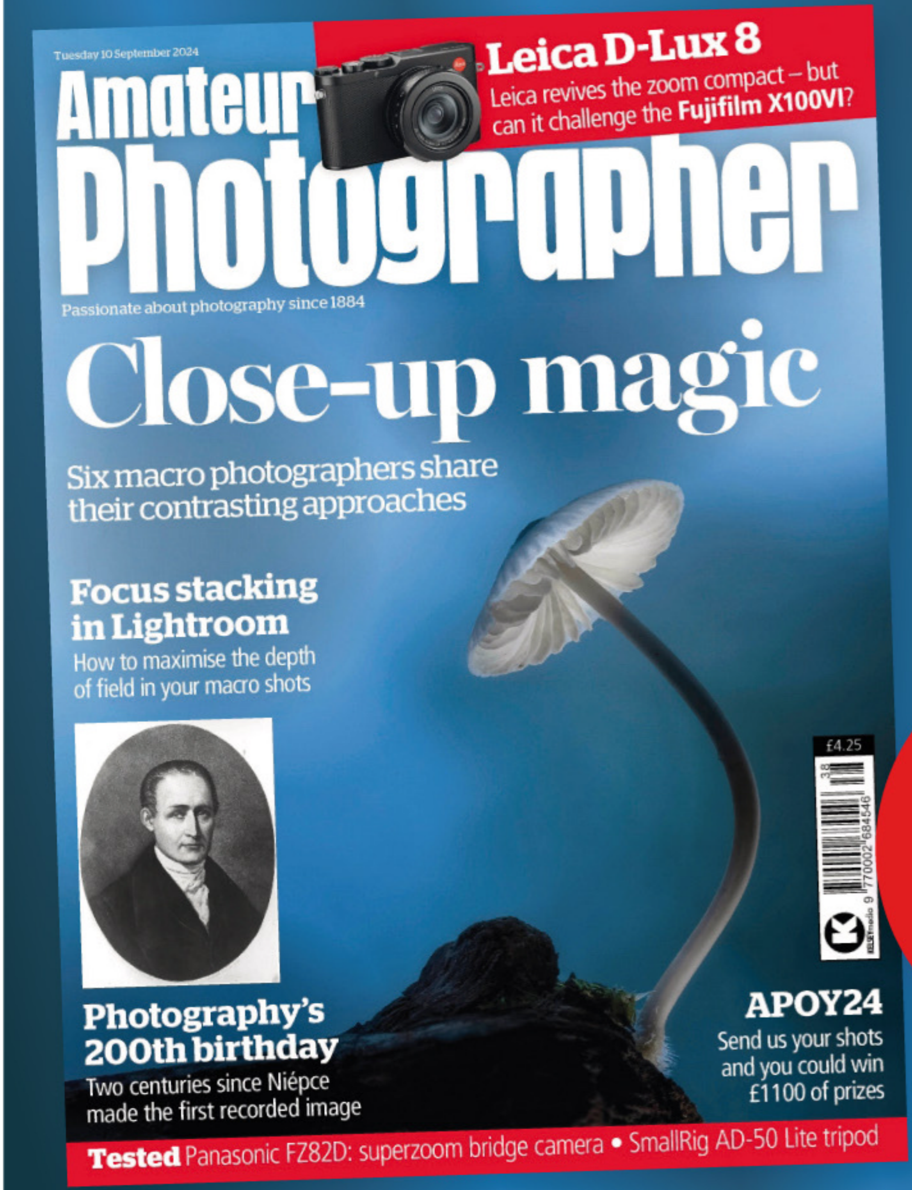
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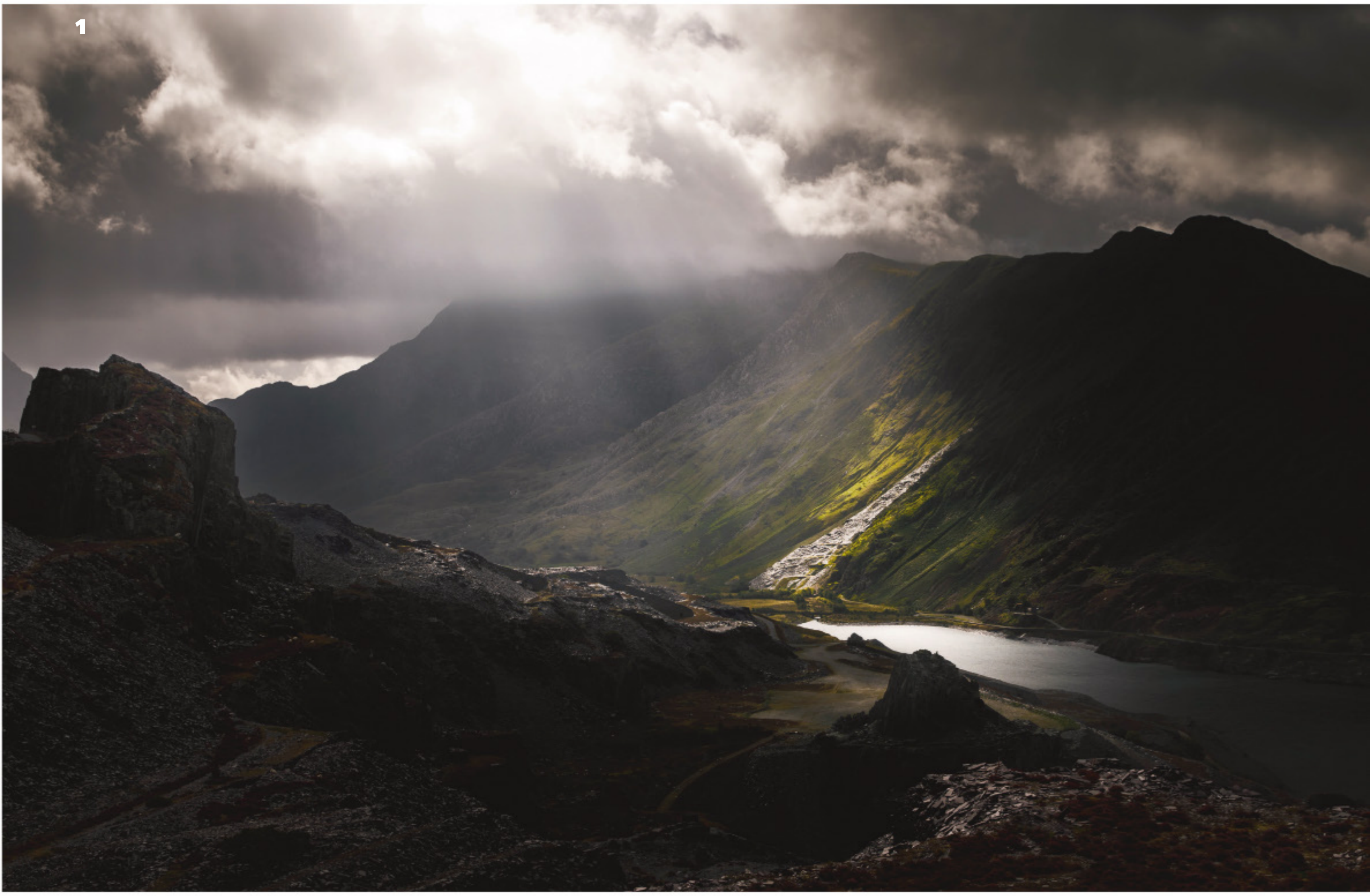
Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them

1



Edward Lee Davies, Neath

About Edward
You can see more of Edward's photography at Instagram, @ed_photography_wales

How did you get into photography?
I first got into photography when my grandfather passed down his old DSLR kit to me, though at first I had had no idea how it functioned or how to use it.So I began bringing it with me on hikes and walks, teaching myself how to operate the camera. I then started dabbling with editing tools such as Adobe Lightroom and have been doing it ever since.

What do you love about photography?
I love the uniqueness of photography and how no two photos are the same. I love having the ability to be creative and to express myself through my camera.

Favourite subjects
My favourite subjects to photograph have definitely got to be waterfalls and landscapes. I love to photograph waterfalls because of the technical challenges involved with capturing them, and the freedom you have to try different techniques. I especially love photographing landscapes because of the incredible scenes you get to witness.

How and where do you find inspiration?
From other photographers and also by exploring different spots and finding my own compositions.

A Break in the Clouds

1 I was walking in Snowdonia National Park when I saw a break in the clouds where light rays were shining through, and I decided to take the shot. I took multiple exposures and stacked them in Lightroom as an HDR, then made basic adjustments and colour changes.
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 24-70mm f/2.8 II, 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 100

What was your first camera?
A Canon EOS 400D, which for starting out was a brilliant camera.

Current kit
The Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, the EF 24-70mm F2.8 II, and the EF 70-200mm F2.8 II.

Favourite lens
It's definitely got to be the 24-70mm due to its exceptional Image quality and its ability to capture any type of scene.

Favourite accessory
My K&F Concept carbon fibre tripod.

Dream purchase
A DJI camera drone so I can capture landscapes and environments from above.

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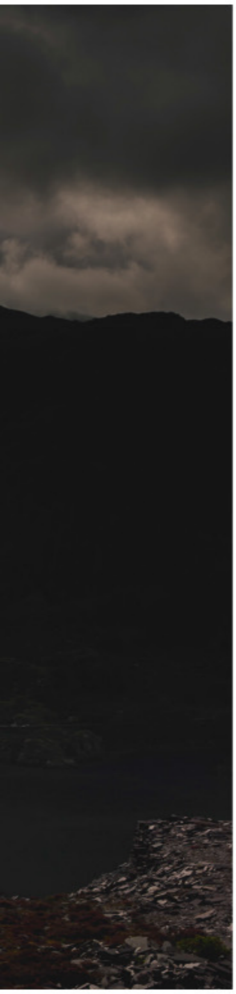
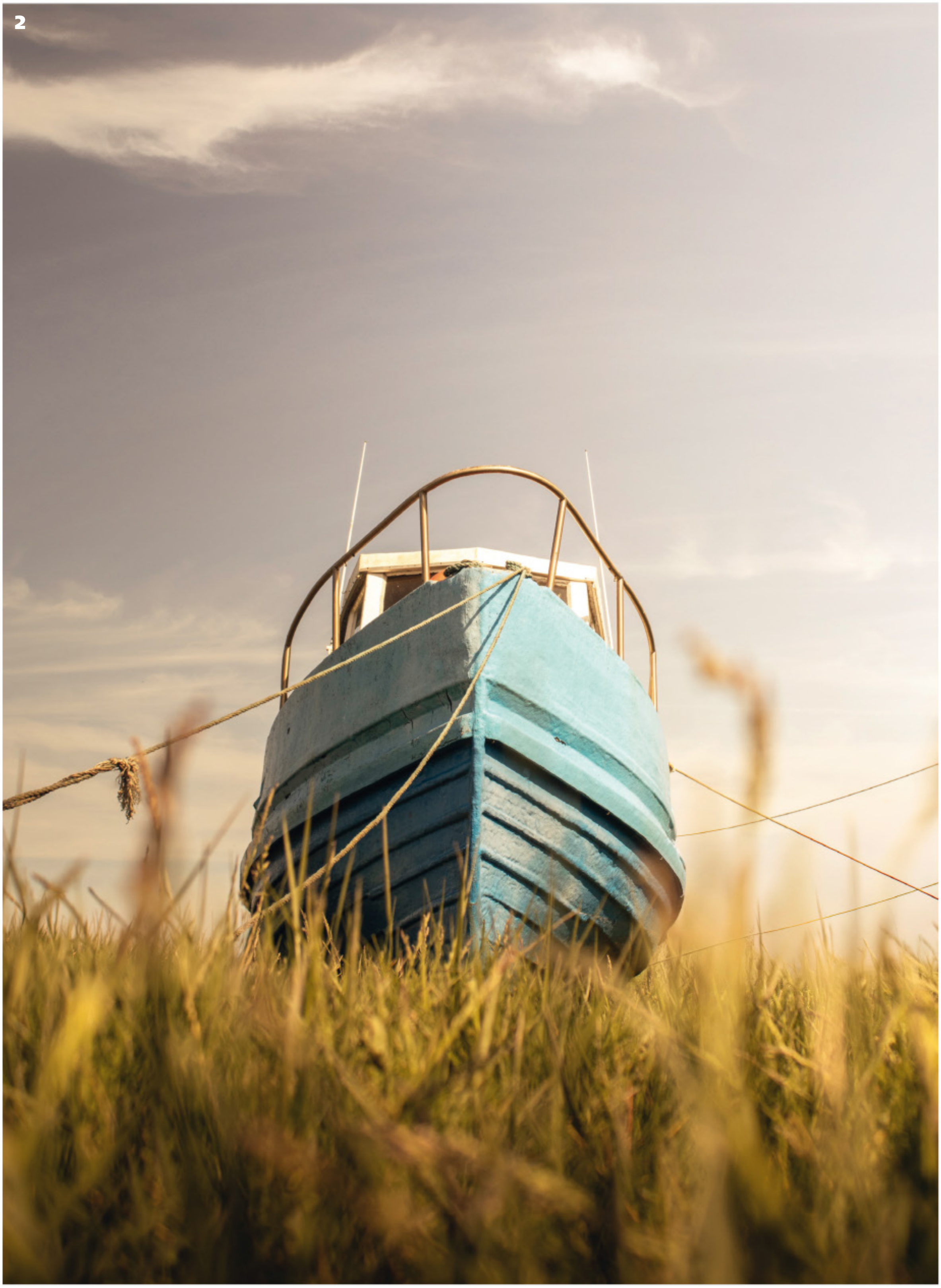
Submit your images
See page 3 for details of how to submit. You could see your photos here in a future issue! Please note: the prize is subject to change.





2

Harbour

2 While exploring a local estuary, I discovered this incredible-looking boat standing in the grass. I chose to use the grass as the foreground, and the widest possible aperture to draw focus towards the boat. I then edited the photo in Lightroom, enhancing colour and contrast.
Canon EOS 250D, Canon 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6, 1/1000sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

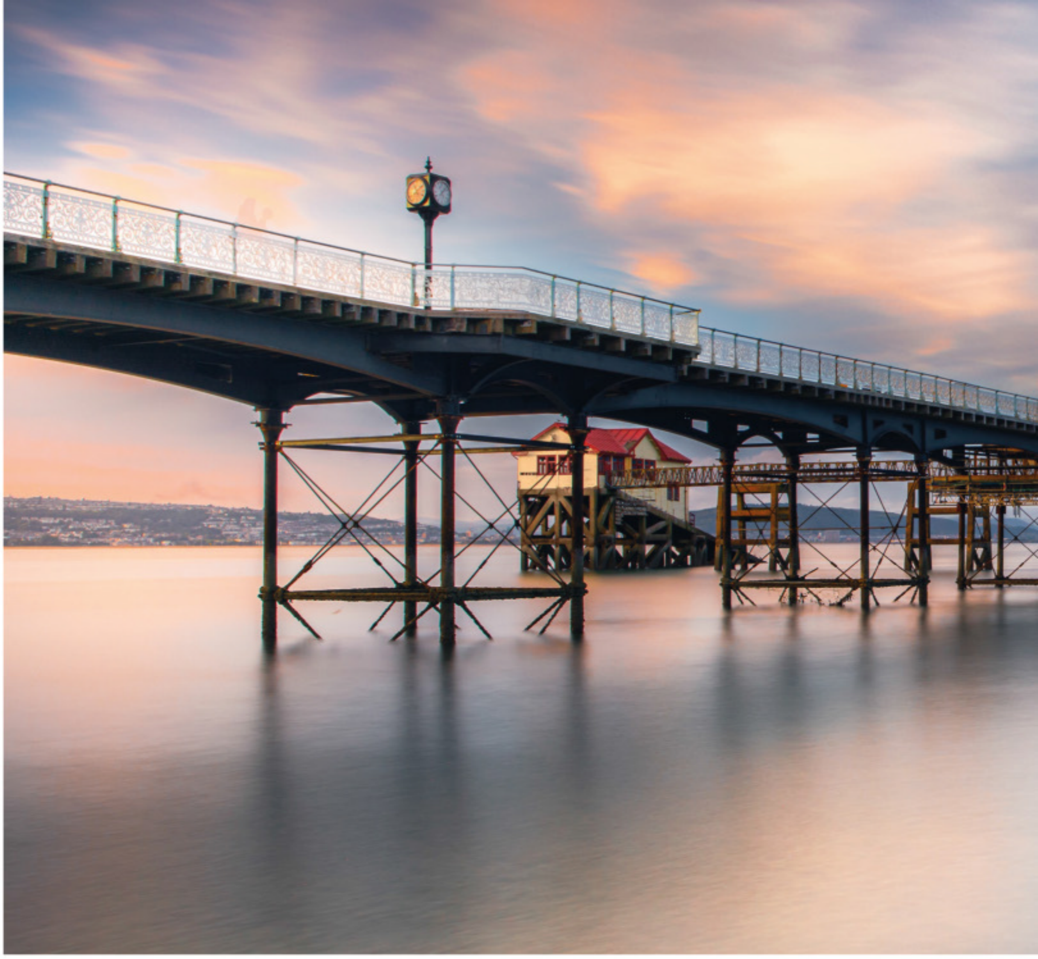
What software do you use for editing?
Adobe Lightroom Classic.

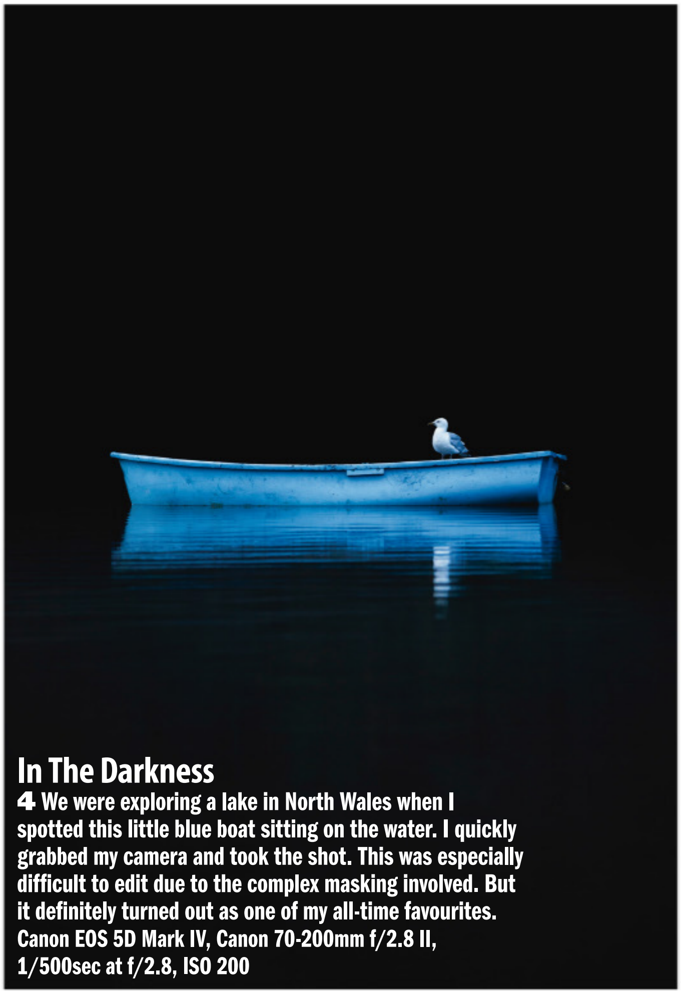
Favourite photographers
The most influential photographers for me have definitely got to be Ansel Adams, Isabella Tabacchi and Luke Stackpool.

Favourite photography books
The *Art of Photography*, *The Photography Bible* and Elizabeth Gilbert's *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear*.

Favourite tips
Just have fun. You won't be good straight away, but just keep taking photos and soon you will start to get the hang of it.

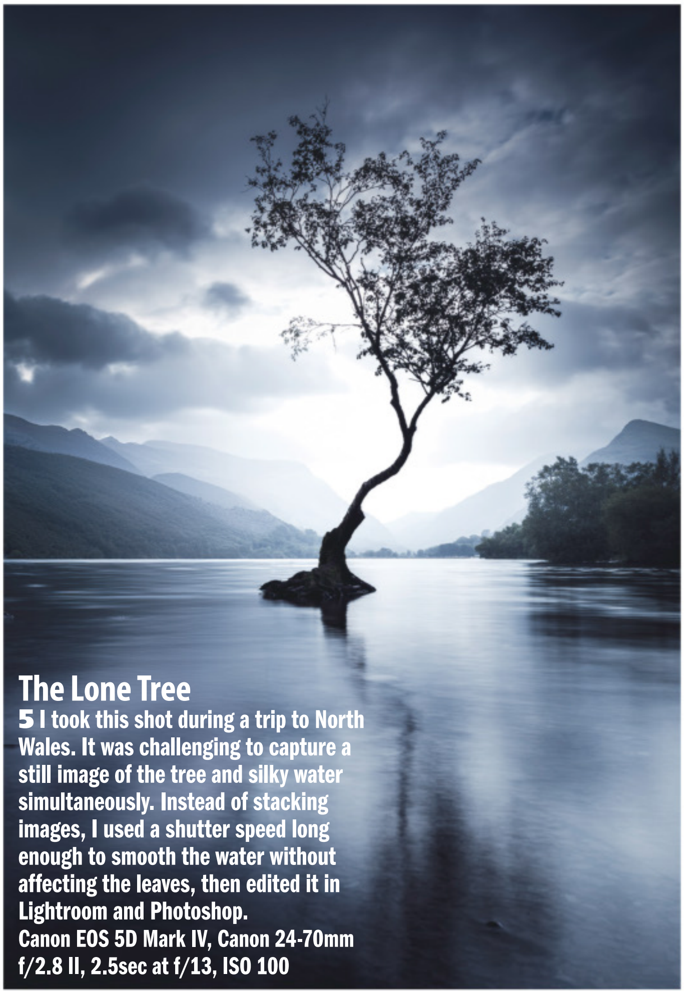
About your pictures
Every photograph that I take shows the beauty of the world. The way that trees can form into such unique shapes. How even man-made structures such as piers can be incredible.





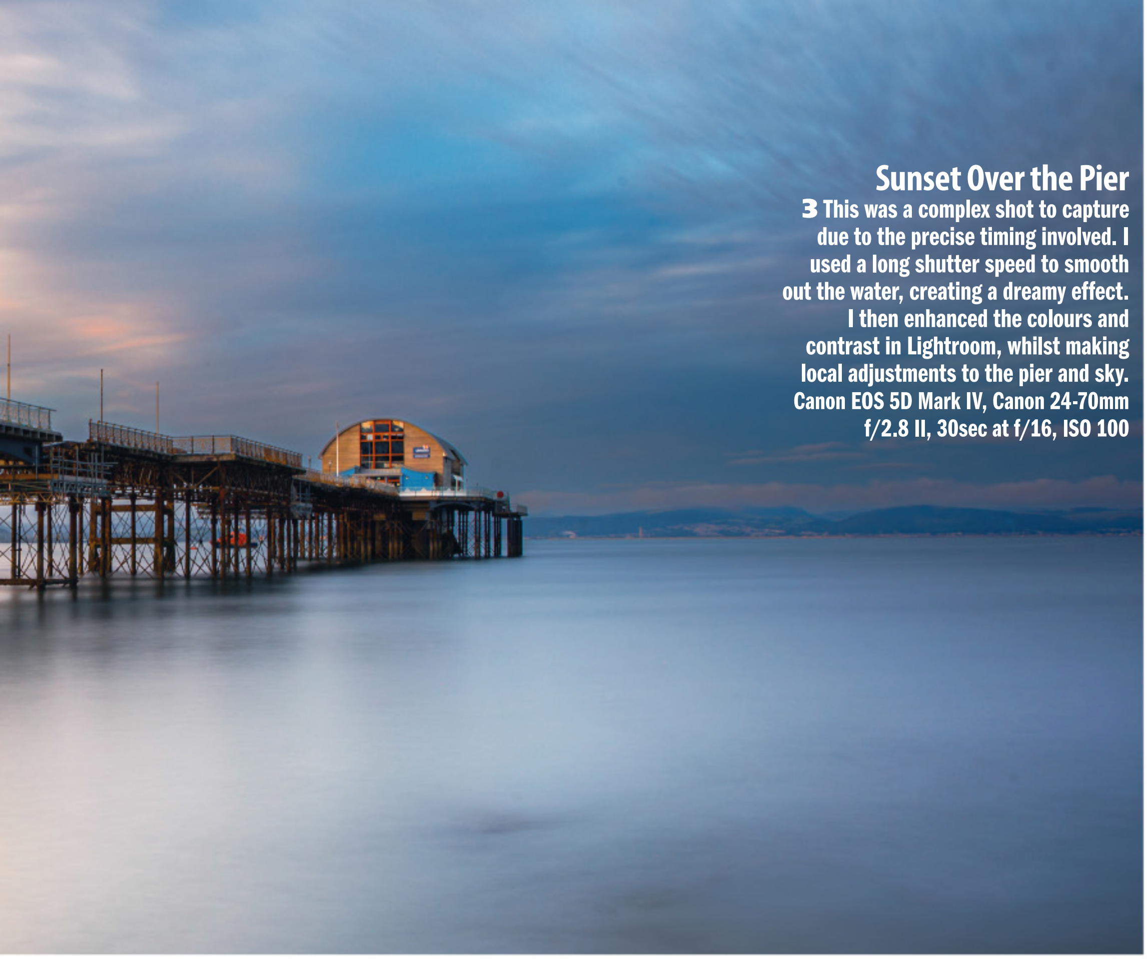
In The Darkness

4 We were exploring a lake in North Wales when I spotted this little blue boat sitting on the water. I quickly grabbed my camera and took the shot. This was especially difficult to edit due to the complex masking involved. But it definitely turned out as one of my all-time favourites.
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 70-200mm f/2.8 II, 1/500sec at f/2.8, ISO 200



The Lone Tree

5 I took this shot during a trip to North Wales. It was challenging to capture a still image of the tree and silky water simultaneously. Instead of stacking images, I used a shutter speed long enough to smooth the water without affecting the leaves, then edited it in Lightroom and Photoshop.
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 24-70mm f/2.8 II, 2.5sec at f/13, ISO 100



Sunset Over the Pier

3 This was a complex shot to capture due to the precise timing involved. I used a long shutter speed to smooth out the water, creating a dreamy effect. I then enhanced the colours and contrast in Lightroom, whilst making local adjustments to the pier and sky. Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 24-70mm f/2.8 II, 30sec at f/16, ISO 100

The Mountain King

6 While exploring Dinorwic Quarry we stumbled across a herd of Welsh mountain goats, but this goat stood out. I quickly picked up my camera and took the shot. When editing, I made sure to highlight the goat's horns, and I especially love the way the light reflects off the horns.
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 70-200mm f/2.8 II, 1/640sec at f/4, ISO 100

Llyn Y Fan Fach

7 This image was captured during a visit to Llyn Y Fan Fach. I used a tripod to create an HDR shot, which helped reveal more detail in the clouds and maintain proper exposure. I then edited the photo in Lightroom, darkening parts of the image for a dramatic effect.
Canon EOS 5D Mark IV, Canon 24-70mm f/2.8 II, 1/200sec at f/7.1, ISO 100

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Professional Imagemaker **Magazine June-July 2024**

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After

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Buying Guide

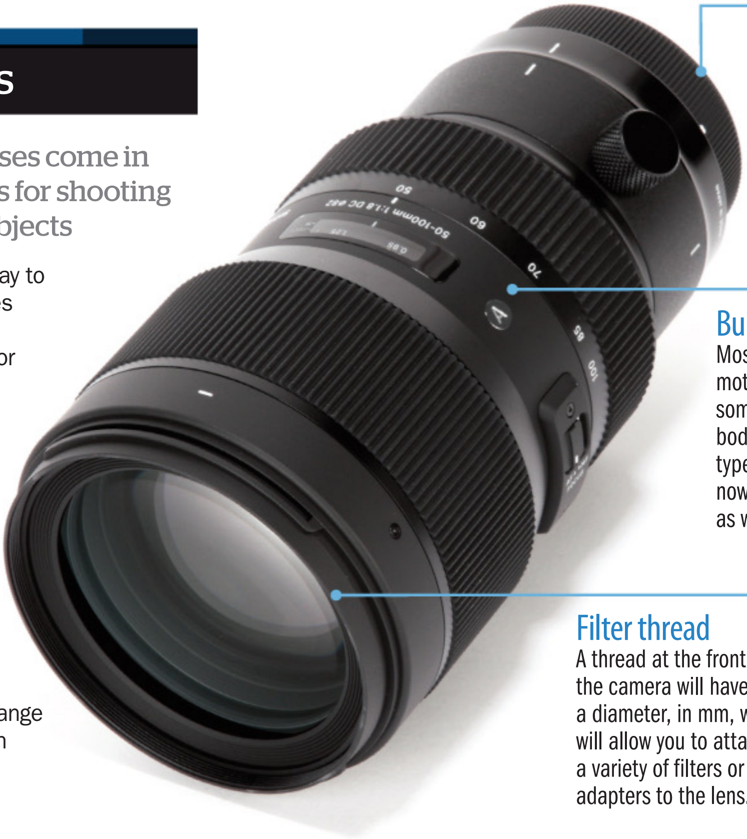
177 lenses listed & rated

Our comprehensive listing of key specifications for DSLR lenses

DSLR Lenses

Interchangeable lenses come in a huge array of types for shooting different kinds of subjects

IN GENERAL, the easiest way to expand the kinds of pictures you can take is by buying different types of lenses. For example, telephoto lenses let you zoom in on distant subjects, while macro lenses enable close-ups of small objects. Large-aperture lenses allow you to isolate subjects against blurred backgrounds, or shoot in low light without having to raise the ISO too high. Meanwhile, all-in-one superzooms cover a wide range of subjects, but usually with rather lower optical quality.



Lens mounts

Each manufacturer has its own lens mount and most aren't compatible with one another. For example, a Canon DSLR can't use Nikon lenses, although you can use independent brands if you get them with the right mount.

Built-in focus motor

Most lenses now incorporate an internal motor to drive the autofocus, although some are still driven from the camera body. DSLR lenses often use ultrasonic-type motors for fast focusing, but some now have video-friendly stepper motors as widely used in mirrorless systems.

Filter thread

A thread at the front of the camera will have a diameter, in mm, which will allow you to attach a variety of filters or adapters to the lens.

Maximum aperture

Wider apertures mean you can use faster, motion-stopping shutter speeds.

OUR GUIDE TO THE SUFFIXES USED BY LENS MANUFACTURERS

AF	Nikon AF lenses driven from camera
AF-S	Nikon lenses with Silent Wave Motor
AF-P	Nikon lenses with stepper motors
AL	Pentax lenses with aspheric elements
APD	Fujifilm lenses with apodisation elements
APO	Sigma Apochromatic lenses
ASPH	Aspherical elements
AW	Pentax all-weather lenses
CS	Samyang lenses for APS-C cropped sensors
D	Nikon lenses that communicate distance info
DA	Pentax lenses optimised for APS-C-sized sensors
DC	Nikon defocus-control portrait lenses
DC	Sigma's lenses for APS-C digital
DG	Sigma's designation for full-frame lenses
Di	Tamron lenses for full-frame sensors
Di-II	Tamron lenses designed for APS-C DSLRs
Di-III	Tamron lenses for mirrorless cameras
DN	Sigma's lenses for mirrorless cameras
DO	Canon diffractive optical element lenses
DT	Sony lenses for APS-C-sized sensors
DX	Nikon's lenses for DX-format digital
DS	Canon's Defocus Smoothing technology
E	Nikon lenses with electronic apertures
E	Sony lenses for APS-C mirrorless
ED	Extra-low Dispersion elements
EF	Canon's lenses for full-frame DSLRs
EF-S	Canon's lenses for APS-C DSLRs
EF-M	Canon's lenses for APS-C mirrorless
EX	Sigma's 'Excellent' range
FA	Pentax full-frame lenses
FE	Sony lenses for full-frame mirrorless
G	Nikon lenses without an aperture ring
HSM	Sigma's Hypersonic Motor
IS	Canon's Image-Stabilised lenses
L	Canon's 'Luxury' range of high-end lenses
LD	Low-Dispersion glass
LM	Fujifilm Linear Motor
MP-E	Canon's high-magnification macro lens
OIS	Optical Image Stabilisation
OS	Sigma's Optically Stabilised lenses
PC-E	Nikon tilt-and-shift lenses
PF	Nikon Phase Fresnel optics
PZD	Tamron Piezo Drive focus motor
RF	Canon full-frame mirrorless lenses
S	Nikon's premium lenses for mirrorless
SAM	Sony Smooth Autofocus Motor
SDM	Pentax's Sonic Direct Drive Motor
SMC	Pentax Super Multi Coating
SP	Tamron's Super Performance range
SSM	Sony Supersonic Motor lenses
STF	Sony and Laowa Smooth Trans Focus
STM	Canon lenses with stepper motor
TS-E	Canon Tilt-and-Shift lens
UMC	Ultra Multi Coated
USM	Canon lenses with an Ultrasonic Motor
USD	Tamron Ultrasonic Drive motor
VC	Tamron's Vibration Compensation
VR	Nikon's Vibration Reduction feature
WR	Weather Resistant
Z	Nikon's lenses for mirrorless cameras

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DSLR Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY		MOUNT									DIMENSIONS		
				IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
CANON DSLR																
EF-S 10-18mm f/4.5-5.6 IS STM	£299	4★	A superb ultra-wideangle that's a must-have for anyone shooting landscapes and cityscapes	·		·						22	67	74.6	72	240
EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM	£990	4★	A good performer, with solid MTF curves and minimal chromatic aberration			·						24	77	83.5	89.8	385
EF-S 17-55mm f/2.8 IS USM	£795	4★	Very capable lens with three-stop image stabilisation, Super Spectra coating and a circular aperture	·		·						35	77	83.5	110.6	645
EF-S 18-55mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£220		Latest standard zoom for Canon's APS-C EOS DSLRs, with compact design and updated optics	·		·						25	58	66.5	61.8	215
EF-S 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 IS USM	£500		Versatile zoom with new Nano USM focus technology and optional power zoom adapter	·		·						39	67	77.4	96	515
EF-S 24mm f/2.8 STM	£165	4★	Bargain price, tiny carry-everywhere size and a highly competent imaging performance			·						16	52	68.2	22.8	125
EF-S 55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS STM	£265		A compact telephoto lens featuring smooth, quiet STM focusing when shooting movies	·		·						110	58	70	111.2	375
EF 8-15mm f/4 L USM	£1499		Impressive-looking fisheye zoom lens from Canon			·					·	15	n/a	78.5	83	540
EF 11-24mm f/4 L USM	£2799	5★	Long-awaited by Canon full-frame users, this is the world's widest-angle rectilinear zoom lens			·					·	28	n/a	108	132	1180
EF 16-35mm f/2.8 L III USM	£2150		Revamped wideangle zoom includes new optics in a weather-sealed lens barrel			·					·	28	82	89.5	127.5	790
EF 16-35mm f/4 L IS USM	£1199	4★	Versatile and with a useful IS system, this is a very good ultra-wideangle zoom for full-frame cameras	·		·					·	28	77	82.6	112.8	615
EF 17-40mm f/4 L USM	£940	4★	Designed to match the needs of demanding professionals – and does so with ease			·					·	28	77	83.5	96.8	500
EF 24mm f/1.4 L II USM	£2010		Subwavelength structure coating, together with UD and aspherical elements			·					·	25	77	83.5	86.9	650
EF 24-70mm f/2.8 L II USM	£2300	5★	Professional-quality standard zoom lens with a fast aperture			·					·	38	82	88.5	113	805
EF 24-105mm f/4 L IS II USM	£1129	4★	Reworked workhorse zoom for full-frame cameras uses an all-new optical design	·		·					·	45	77	83.5	118	795
EF 35mm f/1.4 L II USM	£1799	5★	An outstanding addition to the L-series line-up			·					·	28	72	80.4	104.4	760
EF 50mm f/1.2 L USM	£1910		Very wide maximum aperture and Super Spectra coatings, and a circular aperture			·					·	45	72	85.8	65.5	580
EF 50mm f/1.4 USM	£450	5★	Brilliant performer, with a highly consistent set of MTF curves. AF motor is a tad noisy, though			·					·	45	58	73.8	50.5	290
EF 50mm f/1.8 STM	£130	5★	Lightest EF lens in the range, with wide maximum aperture and a Micro Motor			·					·	35	49	69.2	39.3	130
EF 70-200mm f/2.8 L IS III USM	£2150		Updates Canon's excellent pro workhorse zoom with water-repellent fluorine coatings	·		·					·	120	77	88.8	199	1480
EF 70-200mm f/4L IS II USM	£1300		Upgraded premium telephoto zoom promises five stops of image stabilisation	·		·					·	100	72	80	176	780
EF 70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 IS II USM	£499	4.5★	Mid-range telephoto zoom offers really good optics and fast, silent autofocus	·		·					·	120	67	80	145.5	710
EF 75-300mm f/4-5.6 III	£300		Essentially the same lens as the 75-300mm f/4-5.6 III USM but with no USM			·					·	150	58	71	122	480
EF 85mm f/1.4L IS USM	£1570	5★	Sublime, highly desirable portrait lens combines large aperture and optical image stabilisation	·		·					·	85	77	88.6	105.4	950
EF 85mm f/1.8 USM	£470	5★	Non-rotating front ring thanks to rear-focusing system, as well as USM			·					·	85	58	75	71.5	425
EF 100mm f/2.8 L Macro IS USM	£1060	5★	Stunning MTF figures from this pro-grade macro optic	·		·					·	30	67	77.7	123	625
EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 L IS II USM	£1999	4.5★	L-series construction and optics, including fluorite and Super UD elements	·		·					·	98	77	94	193	1640
TS-E 17mm f/4 L	£2920		Ultra-wideangle tilt-and-shift optic with independent rotation of the tilt and shift movements			·					·	25	77	88.9	106.9	820
TS-E 24mm f/3.5 L II	£2550		Tilt-and-shift optic with independent tilt-and-shift rotation and redesigned coatings			·					·	21	82	88.5	106.9	780
TS-E 50mm f/2.8L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification			·					·	27	77	86.9	114.9	945
TS-E 90mm f/2.8L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification			·					·	39	77	86.9	116.5	915
TS-E 135mm f/4L Macro	£2500		Tilt-and-shift macro lens for specialist product photography, with 1:2 magnification			·					·	49	82	88.5	139.1	1110

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

We've tried our hardest to ensure that the information in this guide is as complete and accurate as possible. However, some errors will inevitably have crept in along the way: if you spot one, please let us know by emailing ap.ed@kelsey.co.uk. Unfortunately we don't have space to list every single product on the market, so we don't include the most expensive speciality items. **Before making a purchase we advise you to check prices, along with any crucial specifications or requirements, with either a reputable retailer or the manufacturer's website.**

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DSLR Lenses

				IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
LENS	**RRP**	**SCORE**	**SUMMARY**		**MOUNT**									**DIMENSIONS**		
LAOWA DSLR																
12mm f/2.8 Zero D	£899		Ultra-wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs that exhibits minimal distortion		·	·		·	·		·	18	77	74.8	82.8	609
14mm f/4 Zero-D DSLR	£499		Relatively compact and lightweight ultra-wideangle manual focus prime that promises low distortion			·		·			·	15	67	72.5	75	320
15mm f/4 1:1 Macro	£449	4★	Unusual wideangle lens that offers 1:1 Macro together with vertical shift movements on APS-C cameras		·	·		·	·		·	12	77	83.8	64.7	410
15mm f/4.5 Zero-D Shift	£1249	4★	The world's widest-angle shift lens offers +/-11mm movement in any direction			·		·			·	20	n/a	79	103	597
20mm f/4 Zero-D Shift	£1139		Wideangle shift lens that offers +/-11mm movement and promises zero distortion			·		·			·	25	82	91	95	747
24mm f/14 2x Macro Probe	£1599		Unique specialist macro lens with submersible front barrel and built-in LED lights			·		·			·	47	n/a	38	408	474
24mm f/14 2x Peri Probe	£2449		Development of macro probe design with swappable straight and 90° periscopic front sections			·		·			·		n/a	61.3	408	770
25mm f/2.8 Ultra Macro 2.5x - 5x	£399		Unusual lens designed solely for ultra-close-up shooting, with magnification from 2.5x to 5x			·		·	·		·	17.3	n/a	65	82	400
60mm f/2.8 2X Ultra Macro	£319	3.5★	With 2:1 Macro, an all-in-one option for normal portrait photography as well as ultra-macro		·	·		·	·		·	18.5	62	95	70	503
100mm f/2.8 2:1 Ultra Macro APO	£469		Full-frame macro lens with twice-life-size magnification and apochromatic design			·		·	·		·	24.7	67	125	72	638
105mm f/2 (T3.2) STF	£649	4★	Designed for full-frame DSLRS, and features an apodisation element that renders lovely bokeh		·	·		·	·		·	90	67	98.9	76	745
NIKON DSLR																
10-20mm f/4.5-5.6 G VR AF-P DX	£330	3.5★	Inexpensive wide zoom for DX DSLRs has effective image stabilisation but rather average optics	·				·				22	72	77	73	230
10-24mm f/3.5-4.5 G ED AF-S DX	£834	4★	MTF performance is good from wide open to f/11, only breaking down past f/22					·				24	77	82.5	87	460
18-140mm f/3.5-5.6 G ED VR AF-S DX	£579		A compact and lightweight DX-format zoom, this lens is a great all-rounder	·				·				45	67	78	97	490
18-300mm f/3.5-6.3 G ED VR	£849		New DX-format 16.7x zoom with super-telephoto reach – a compact walk-around lens	·				·				48	67	78.5	99	550
35mm f/1.8 G AF-S DX	£208	5★	Designed for DX-format DSLRs, a great standard prime lens					·				30	52	70	52.5	200
40mm f/2.8 G AF-S DX Micro	£250	5★	A budget-priced macro lens that delivers the goods on multiple fronts					·				20	52	68.5	64.5	235
85mm f/3.5 G ED AF-S DX VR	£522		DX-format Micro lens with a 1:1 reproduction ratio, VR II system and ED glass	·				·				28	52	73	98.5	355
8-15mm f/3.5-4.5 E ED Fisheye AF-S	£1299		Fisheye zoom for full-frame DSLRs that gives a circular view at 8mm and full-frame coverage at 15mm					·			·	16	n/a	77.5	83	485
14-24mm f/2.8 G ED AF-S	£1670	5★	A remarkable piece of kit, producing sharp images with little chromatic aberration					·			·	28	n/a	98	131.5	970
16-35mm f/4 G ED AF-S VR	£1072	5★	A fantastic lens that deserves to be taken seriously, with very little CA throughout	·				·			·	28	77	82.5	125	685
20mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£679		A fast FX-format prime lens that's compact and lightweight					·			·	20	77	82.5	80.5	335
24mm f/1.4 G ED AF-S	£1990	5★	Nothing short of stunning. Aside from its high price, there is very little to dislike about this optic					·			·	25	77	83	88.5	620
24mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£629		Fast FX-format lens that aims to appeal to landscape, interior, architecture and street photographers					·			·	23	72	77.5	83	355
24-70mm f/2.8 E ED VR	£1849	5★	Nikon's latest pro-spec standard zoom looks like its best lens yet	·				·			·	38	82	88	154.5	1070
24-85mm f/3.5-4.5 G ED VR	£520	5★	FX-format standard zoom with Auto Tripod detection and VR	·				·			·	38	72	78	82	465
24-120mm f/4 G ED AF-S VR	£1072	5★	Constant maximum aperture of f/4 and the addition of VR makes this a superb lens	·				·			·	45	77	84	103	710
28mm f/1.4 E ED AF-S	£2080		Boasts a dust- and drip-resistant build for reliable shooting in challenging weather conditions					·			·	28	77	83	100.5	645
28mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£619	5★	If you crave a wide aperture and prefer a single focal length then this Nikon prime delivers					·			·	25	67	73	80	330
35mm f/1.4 G ED AF-S	£1735	5★	A Nano Crystal-coated lens designed for the FX range					·			·	30	67	83	89.5	600
35mm f/1.8 G ED AF-S	£479		Fast FX-format prime lens with bright f/1.8 aperture. Versatile and lightweight					·			·	25	58	72	71.5	305
50mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£376	5★	Internal focusing and superior AF drive makes this a good alternative to the D-series 50mm f/1.4	·				·			·	45	58	73.5	54	280
50mm f/1.8 D AF	£135		Compact, lightweight, affordable prime, will stop down to f/22					·			·	45	52	63	39	160
50mm f/1.8 G AF-S	£200	5★	A cut-price standard lens for FX shooters or a short telephoto on DX-format DSLRs					·			·	45	58	72	52.5	185
58mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£1599	4★	FX-format full-frame premium prime lens with large f/1.4 aperture					·			·	58	72	85	70	385
70-200mm f/2.8 E FL ED VR AF-S	£2650		Latest update to Nikon's pro workhorse fast telephoto zoom brings electronic aperture control	·				·			·	110	77	88.5	202.5	1430
70-300mm f/4.5-5.6 E ED VR AF-P	£750		Nikon's first full-frame lens to feature a stepper motor for autofocus	·				·			·	1200	67	80.5	146	680
80-400mm f/4.5-5.6 G ED VR AF-S	£1899	5★	Successor to the 80-400mm f/4.5-5.6D ED VR, focusing is excellent at tracking fast-moving subjects	·				·			·	175	77	95.5	203	1570
85mm f/1.4 G AF-S	£1532	5★	Fast mid-tele lens with an internal focusing system and rounded diaphragm					·			·	85	77	86.5	84	595
85mm f/1.8 G AF-S	£470	5★	Rear-focusing system and distance window in this medium telephoto lens					·			·	80	67	80	73	350
105mm f/1.4 E ED AF-S	£2049		A 105mm FX-format prime lens with bright f/1.4 aperture, ideal for portraiture					·			·	100	82	94.5	106	985
200-500mm f/5.6 E ED VR AF-S	£1179		A super-telephoto zoom lens compatible with Nikon FX-format DSLR cameras	·				·			·	220	95	108	267.5	2300
300mm f/4 E PF ED VR AF-S	£1230	5★	Light, compact AF-S full-frame telephoto lens with ED glass elements	·				·			·	140	77	89	147.5	755
19mm f/4 E ED PC	£3300		Super-wideangle tilt-and-shift lens for architecture and landscape photography					·			·	25	n/a	89	124	885
24mm f/3.5 D ED PC-E	£1774		Perspective Control lens with Nano Crystal Coating and electronic control over aperture					·			·	21	77	82.5	108	730
45mm f/2.8 D ED PC-E Micro	£1393		Perspective Control (PC-E) standard lens used in specialised fields such as studio and architecture					·			·	25	77	82.5	112	740

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DSLR Lenses

LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY		MOUNT									DIMENSIONS		
				IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
PENTAX DSLR																
DA 10-17mm f/3.5-4.5 HD Fisheye ED	£499		Updated fisheye zoom lens gains refreshed cosmetic design, new optical coatings and removable hood						·			14	n/a	70	67.5	317
DA* 11-18mmF2.8 ED DC AW HD	£1399		Premium fast ultra-wideangle zoom, includes all-weather construction and innovative focus clamp						·			30	82	90	100	704
DA 15mm f/4 smc ED AL Limited	£820		Limited-edition lens with hybrid aspherical and extra-low-dispersion elements						·			18	49	39.5	63	212
FA 15-30mm f/2.8 ED SM WR HD	£1500		Weather-resistant ultra-wideangle zoom with fast maximum aperture and fixed petal-type hood						·		·	28	n/a	98.5	143.5	1040
DA* 16-50mm f/2.8 ED PLM AW HD	£1500		All-new premium large-aperture standard zoom with updated optics and electromagnetic aperture control						·			30	77	84	117	712
DA 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC WR	£600		Weather-resistant, this zoom features a round-shaped diaphragm to produce beautiful bokeh						·			35	72	78	94	488
DA 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 smc AL WR	£229		A weather-resistant construction and an aspherical element, as well as SP coating						·			25	52	68.5	67.5	230
DA 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 DA ED DC WR	£600	3.5★	A weather-resistant mid-range zoom lens						·			40	62	73	76	405
DA 20-40mm f/2.8-4 ED Limited DC WR	£829		With state-of-the-art HD coating, a completely round-shaped diaphragm, and weather resistant						·			28	55	68.5	71	283
HD-FA 21mm f/2.4 ED Limited DC WR	£1499		Ultra-wide addition to the premium Limited line-up, with aluminium barrel and electromagnetic aperture motor						·		·	18	67	74	89	416
DA 21mm f/3.2 smc AL Limited	£600		This limited-edition optic offers a floating element for extra-close focusing						·			20	49	63	25	140
FA 24-70mm f/2.8 ED SDM WR	£1149		Full-frame-compatible premium standard zoom – includes a HD coating to minimise flare and ghosting						·		·	38	82	109.5	88.5	787
FA 28-105mm f/3.5-5.6 ED DC HD	£549		Standard zoom lens for the K-1 full-frame DSLR that's much more affordable than the 24-70mm f/2.8						·		·	50	62	73	86.5	440
HD-FA 31mm f/1.8 Limited	£1100		Premium aluminium-bodied wideangle prime boasts an aperture ring plus HD and fluorine coatings						·		·	30	58	69	65	341
FA 35mm f/2 HD	£399		Latest version of venerable Pentax fast prime features a multi-layer HD coating						·		·	30	49	64	44.5	193
DA 35mm f/2.4 smc DS AL	£180	5★	A budget-priced prime lens for beginners						·			30	49	63	45	124
DA 35mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£640	4.5★	Despite slight edge softness, this lens performs excellently and is a pleasure to use						·			14	49	46.5	63	215
DA 40mm f/2.8 smc Limited	£450		Pancake lens with SMC coating and Quick Shift focusing system						·			40	49	63	15	90
HD-FA 43mm f/1.9 Limited	£650		Classic full-frame fast prime with perfect focal length for everyday use						·		·	45	49	64	27	155
FA* 50mm f/1.4 SDM AW HD	£1200		Premium fast prime with dustproof, weather-resistant design and electromagnetic aperture						·		·	40	72	80	106	910
HD-FA 50mm f/1.4	£399		Updated large-aperture prime with HD coatings and refreshed cosmetic design						·		·	45	49	65	40.5	223
FA 50mm f/1.4 smc Classic	£449		Compact fast prime with film-era optics, aperture ring, and coatings designed to give 'rainbow flare'						·		·	45	49	65	37	216
DA 50mm f/1.8 smc DA	£249	4★	Affordable short telephoto lens ideal for portraits						·			45	52	38.5	63	122
D-FA 50mm f/2.8 smc Macro	£550		Macro lens capable of 1:1 reproduction and with a Quick Shift focus mechanism						·		·	19	49	60	67.5	265
DA* 50-135mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM	£1200	4★	Constant f/2.8 aperture; well suited to portraiture and mid-range action subjects						·			100	67	76.5	136	765
DA 50-200mm f/4-5.6 smc ED WR	£210		Weather-resistant construction, Quick Shift focus system and an SP coating						·			n/a	49	69	79.5	285
DA* 55mm f/1.4 smc SDM	£800	4.5★	Despite questions about the particular sample tested, this lens scores highly						·			45	58	70.5	66	375
DA 55-300mm f/4.5-6.3 ED PLM WR RE	£400		Compact weather resistant telephoto zoom has video-friendly fast and silent autofocus motor						·			95	58	76.5	89	442
DA 60-250mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1450	4.5★	With a constant f/4 aperture and an ultrasonic motor for speedy focusing						·			110	67	167.5	82	1040
DA 70mm f/2.4 smc AL Limited	£600		Medium telephoto lens with an aluminium construction and a Super Protect coating						·			70	49	63	26	130
D-FA* 70-200mm f/2.8 ED DC AW	£1850		Fast telephoto zoom in Pentax's high-performance Star (*) series developed for best image rendition						·		·	120	77	91.5	203	1755
D-FA 70-210mm F4 ED SDM WR	£1199		Compact telephoto zoom with constant f/4 maximum aperture and weather-resistant construction						·		·	95	67	78.5	175	819
HD-FA 77mm f/1.8 Limited	£800		Renewed version of short telephoto portrait prime that features a traditional aperture ring						·		·	70	49	48	64	270
D FA* 85mm f/1.4 SDM AW	£1999		Upcoming large-aperture short telephoto prime promises premium optics and weather-sealing						·		·	85	82	95	123.5	1255
HD-FA 100mm f/2.8 ED AW Macro	£699		Updated 1:1 macro lens boasts improved optical formula and all-weather construction						·		·	30	49	65	80.5	348
FA 150-450mm f/4.5-5.6 ED DC AW	£2000		Super-telephoto lens with weather resistance, designed to produce extra-sharp, high-contrast images						·		·	200	86	241.5	95	2000
DA* 200mm f/2.8 smc ED IF SDM	£1000	4.5★	SDM focusing system on the inside, and dirtproof and splashproof on the outside						·			120	77	83	134	825
DA* 300mm f/4 smc ED IF SDM	£1300		This tele optic promises ultrasonic focus and high image quality thanks to ED glass						·			140	77	83	184	1070
SAMYANG DSLR																
8mm f/3.5 UMC Fisheye CS II	£274		Wideangle fisheye lens designed for digital reflex cameras with APS-C sensors		·	·	·	·	·			30	n/a	75	77.8	417
10mm f/3.5 XP MF	£950		World's widest-angle rectilinear lens promises 130° field of view with minimal distortion			·		·			·	26	n/a	95	98.1	731
10mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS CS	£429		Features a nano crystal anti-reflection coating system and embedded lens hood		·	·	·	·	·			24	n/a	86	77	580
12mm f/2.8 ED AS NCS Fisheye	£430		Fisheye ultra wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs		·	·	·	·	·		·	20	n/a	77.3	70.2	500
14mm f/2.4 XP MF	£899		High-end ultra-wideangle prime with premium optics and large maximum aperture			·		·			·	28	n/a	95	109.4	791
AF 14mm f/2.8	£649	4.5★	Samyang's first AF SLR lens features very decent image quality and weather-sealed construction			·		·			·	20	n/a	90.5	95.6	485
14mm f/2.8 MF Mk II	£439		Ultra-wideangle manual-focus prime with weather-sealing and de-clickable aperture ring			·		·			·	28	n/a	87	96.3	641
16mm f/2.0 ED AS UMC CS	£389		Fast wideangle lens for digital reflex cameras fitted with APS-C sensors		·	·	·	·	·			20	n/a	89.4	83	583
20mm f/1.8 ED AS UMC	£430		Large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens for full-frame DSLRs		·	·	·	·	·		·	20	77	83	113.2	520
24mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£499		Fast ultra-wideangle manual-focus lens comprising 13 elements arranged in 12 groups		·	·	·	·	·		·	25	77	95	116	680
24mm f/3.5 ED AS UMS TS	£949	3★	Tilt-and-shift wideangle lens for a fraction of the price of Canon and Nikon's offerings		·	·	·	·	·		·	20	82	86	110.5	680
35mm f/1.2 XP MF	£719		Ultra-large aperture, manual focus prime with premium optics			·					·	34	86	93	117.4	1106
35mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£369	4.5★	While manual focus only, this prime impressed us in real-world use, making it something of a bargain		·	·	·	·	·		·	30	77	83	111	660
50mm f/1.2 XP MF	£639		Large aperture manual-focus prime promises 50MP resolution			·					·	45	86	93	117.4	1200
50mm f/1.4 AS UMC	£299		Manual-focus fast standard prime for full-frame DSLRs		·	·	·	·	·		·	45	77	74.7	81.6	575
85mm f/1.2 XP MF	£899		High-end manual focus lens sports an impressively fast maximum aperture			·					·	80	86	93	98.4	1050g
AF 85mm f/1.4	£599	3★	Autofocus fast short telephoto portrait lens for use on Canon or Nikon full-frame DSLRs			·		·			·	90	77	88	72	485
85mm f/1.4 MF Mk II	£389		Large-aperture short telephoto manual-focus prime is weather-sealed and the aperture can be de-clicked			·		·			·	110	72	78	72.2	541
100mm f/2.8 ED UMC Macro	£389		Full-frame compatible, the Samyang 100mm is a true Macro lens offering 1:1 magnification		·	·	·	·	·		·	30	67	72.5	123.1	720
135mm f/2 ED UMC	£399		Manual focus portrait prime has fast aperture for subject isolation and background blur		·	·	·	·	·		·	80	77	82	122	830

ALL PRICES ARE RRPS, STREET PRICES MAY VARY

DSLR Lenses

				IMAGE STABILISATION	SONY ALPHA	CANON	FOUR THIRDS	NIKON	PENTAX	SIGMA	FULL FRAME	MIN FOCUS (CM)	FILTER THREAD (MM)	DIAMETER (MM)	LENGTH (MM)	WEIGHT (G)
LENS	RRP	SCORE	SUMMARY		MOUNT									DIMENSIONS		
SIGMA DSLR																
12-24mm f/4 DG HSM | A	£1649	5★	Premium full-frame wideangle zoom designed to have minimal distortion in its wideangle imagery			·		·		·	·	24	n/a	101	132	1150
14mm f/1.8 DG HSM | A	£1679		World's first f/1.8 ultra-wideangle prime lens for full-frame DSLRs			·		·		·	·	27	n/a	95.4	126	1170
14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM | A	£1399	5★	Pro-specification fast ultra-wide prime for full-frame DSLRs includes weather-sealed construction			·		·		·	·	26	n/a	96.4	135.1	1150
18-35mm f/1.8 DC HSM | A	£799	5★	Said to be the world's first constant f/1.8 zoom; DoF equivalent of constant f/2.7 on full frame			·		·		·		28	72	78	121	810
20mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£799	5★	An outstanding wideangle fixed-focal-length lens			·		·		·	·	27.6	n/a	90.7	129.8	950
24mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£799	5★	The latest addition to Sigma's 'Art' line of high-quality fast primes			·		·		·	·	25	77	85	90.2	665
24-70mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM | A	£1399	5★	Latest premium fast standard zoom for full frame includes optical image stabilisation	·		·		·		·	·	37	82	88	107.6	1020
24-105mm f/4 DG OS HSM | A	£849	4.5★	Serious full-frame alternative to own-brand lenses at a lower price, with no compromises in the build	·	·	·		·		·	·	45	82	89	109	885
28mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£1099	4.5★	High-quality, weathersealed fast wideangle prime for full-frame DSLRs			·		·		·	·	28	77	82.8	107.1	865
35mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£799	5★	Superb large-aperture prime; first lens in company's 'Art' series		·	·		·	·	·	·	30	67	77	94	665
40mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£1100	5★	Large and heavy prime promising natural-looking perspective and top-quality optics			·		·		·	·	40	82	87.8	131	1200
50mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£849	5★	This lens has a unique design that pays off in truly excellent image quality		·	·		·		·	·	40	77	85.4	100	815
50-100mm f/1.8 DC HSM | A	£829	5★	This APS-C-format lens aims to cover the focal lengths of three prime lenses in one			·		·		·		37.4	82	93.5	170.7	1490
60-600mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM | S	£1899		Weathersealed 10x zoom encompasses huge range from standard to super-telephoto	·		·		·		·	·	60	105	120.4	268.9	2700
70mm f/2.8 DG Macro | A	£499		The first macro lens in Sigma's Art line-up features an extending-barrel focus-by-wire design			·		·		·	·	26	49	71	106	515
70-200mm f/2.8 DG OS HSM | S	£1349	5★	Superb large-aperture telephoto zoom shows high sharpness and minimal chromatic aberration	·		·		·		·	·	120	82	94.2	202.9	1805
85mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£1199	5★	Optically stunning fast short telephoto prime is the ultimate portrait lens for DSLR users			·		·		·	·	85	86	95	126	1130
100-400mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM | C	£799	4.5★	Relatively lightweight telezoom comes with weather-sealing and choice of push-pull or twist zoom	·		·		·		·	·	160	67	86.4	182.3	1160
105mm f/1.4 DG HSM | A	£1499	4.5★	Sigma's 'bokeh monster' super-fast portrait lens is weathersealed and comes with a tripod foot			·		·		·	·	100	105	115.9	131.5	1645
105mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM Macro	£649	4.5★	An optically stabilised macro lens, this super-sharp lens is one of our favourites	·		·		·		·	·	31.2	62	78	126.4	725
120-300mm f/2.8 DG HSM | S	£3599		First lens in company's 'Sports' series; switch enables adjustment of both focus speed and focus limiter		·	·		·	·	·	·	150	105	124	291	3390
135mm f/1.8 DG HSM | A	£1399	5★	Super-fast portrait prime designed to provide sufficient resolution for 50MP DSLRs			·		·		·	·	87.5	82	91.4	114.9	1130
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM | C	£1199		Budget 'Contemporary' version of Sigma's long-range telephoto zoom is smaller and lighter	·		·		·		·	·	280	95	105	260.1	1930
150-600mm f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM | S	£1599		This portable, high-performance telephoto zoom from Sigma's Sports line is dust and splashproof	·		·		·		·	·	260	105	121	290.2	2860
VOIGTLANDER DSLR																
28mm f/2.8 Aspherical Color-Skopar SL II-S	£499		Manual-focus wideangle prime for Nikon F-mount SLRs boasts high-quality metal construction					·			·	15	52	66.3	32.8	205
40mm f/2 Ultron SL II-S	**£470**		**Compact, manual-focus 'pancake' prime designed for use with Nikon full-frame DSLRs**					**·**			**·**	**25**	**52**	**66.3**	**37.5**	**260**
55mm f/1.2 Nokton SL II-S	£549		Manual-focus standard zoom lens for Nikon SLRs with super-large aperture and aperture ring					·			·	45	52	69	48.1	365
58mm f/1.4 Nokton SL II-S	£518		Large-aperture manual focus standard prime for Nikon SLRs, inlcuding classic film cameras					·			·	45	52	67.6	45.5	320
90mm f/2.8 APO-Skopar SL II-S	£529		Remarkably small and lightweight manual-focus short telephoto portrait prime					·			·	90	52	66.3	41	260
ZEISS DSLR																
15mm f/2.8 Milvus	£2329		This super-wideangle lens has an angle of view of 110° and uses an advanced retrofocus design			·		·			·	25	95	102.3	100.2	947
18mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1999		Compact super-wideangle lens with premium optics including a floating focus system for close-ups			·		·			·	25	77	90	93	721
21mm f/2.8 Milvus	£1299		Premium wideangle lens with complex optics designed to be free of distortion			·		·			·	22	82	95.5	95	851
25mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1999	5★	Optically excellent, large-aperture manual focus wideangle lens with weather-sealed construction			·		·			·	25	82	95.2	123	1225
35mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1699		Large aperture, premium-quality manual-focus prime with weather-sealed construction			·		·			·	30	72	84.8	124.8	1174
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50mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£559		Classic double-Gauss design manual focus standard prime for full-frame SLRs			·		·			·	45	58	71	71	380
50mm f/1.4 Milvus	£949	5★	An exceptionally good lens offering sharpness, detail, clean edges and a great user experience			·		·			·	45	67	82.5	94	922
50mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£949		Manual-focus macro lens with half-life-size magnification and stunning optics			·		·			·	24	67	81	75.3	730
85mm f/1.4 Planar T*	£989		Classic portrait prime designed to give smooth, rounded bokeh effects			·		·			·	100	72	78	88	670
85mm f/1.4 Milvus	£1379	5★	Fast 85mm manual-focus prime lens that's perfect for portraiture			·		·			·	80	77	90	113	1280
100mm f/2 Milvus Macro	£1299		A manual-focus macro lens with absolutely superb optics and half-life-size reproduction			·		·			·	88	67	80.5	104	843
135mm f/2 Milvus	£1899		Telephoto lens with a large aperture and smooth bokeh, ideal for medium-distance portrait photography			·		·			·	80	77	129	132	1123

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f/1.4 DC DN | Contemporary

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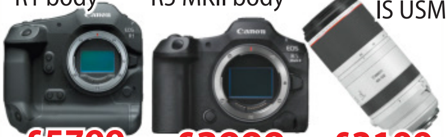

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Final Analysis

Damien Demolder considers...

Tina Turner, Wembley Arena, Break Every Rule Tour, June 1987

Apologies in advance for writing about one of my own pictures again this week, but it is pertinent, to me at least, for a couple of reasons. On the day I'm writing this it is Tina Turner's birthday. She would have been 85 today. Happy birthday, Tina.

The picture is also suddenly significant in my life because we recently finished renovating our house and this is one of three images my wife chose to get enlarged to 80cm, mounted on board and hung on a wall in the lounge. I should be delighted (and I am) that my wife has picked some of my pictures to decorate our house – one's other half finding a use for the labours of our cameras is surely one lofty ambition of countless photographers. We believe it justifies all the effort, money and time. So, I'm proud to see the three – two of Tina and one of Robert Cray – hanging in prominent positions in the house for all to see. And I have to say they look pretty good, despite some slightly uneven development and more than a sprinkling of grain.

Just Seventeen

The thing that bothers me slightly is that they were shot in 1987 when I was 17. I used my Chinon CM-4 with an Asahi Pentax-M SMC 135mm f/3.5 lens and a roll of ORWO 400 film that I bought via mail order from the back pages of this publication. I push-processed the film a couple of stops in Ilford Microphen and printed the pictures in the school darkroom. Since then I've had more cameras than you can shake a thermometer at, enjoyed the wonders of digital technology and gathered 38 years of photographic experience. You would think then that I might have something more recent to go on the wall. Have the intervening years been a waste of my time? Perhaps I should have packed it all in at 18.

Vain attempts

I don't know when to quit though, and find myself frequently reviewing a long series of images in which the first frame is the better image, and the others represent my vain attempts to improve on it with the application of time and repetition. That's a hard enough realisation, but it's several times worse to discover the first shot of a whole day of photography is that which will be 'the one', and all those that came after it were exercises in filling a memory card and keeping my step-count at a healthy level.

This happens so often that I've begun to recognise the early frames that might be the best I'll get. I'm still powerless though over the delusion that they are the starting point from which greater art will follow.

I was reminded of this at the weekend when we enjoyed a *Gladiator* double bill. In the original film, before decimating Germanic barbarians, Quintus remarks to Maximus, 'People should know when they are conquered'. 'Would you, Quintus? Would I?' replies our hero. Perhaps it isn't a matter of knowing when I'm conquered I need to consider, but knowing when I've got the shot. Were the Earth not revolving about the Sun, and the shadows constantly moving, there are street scenes I'd still be standing at, waiting for the perfect moment to come my way.

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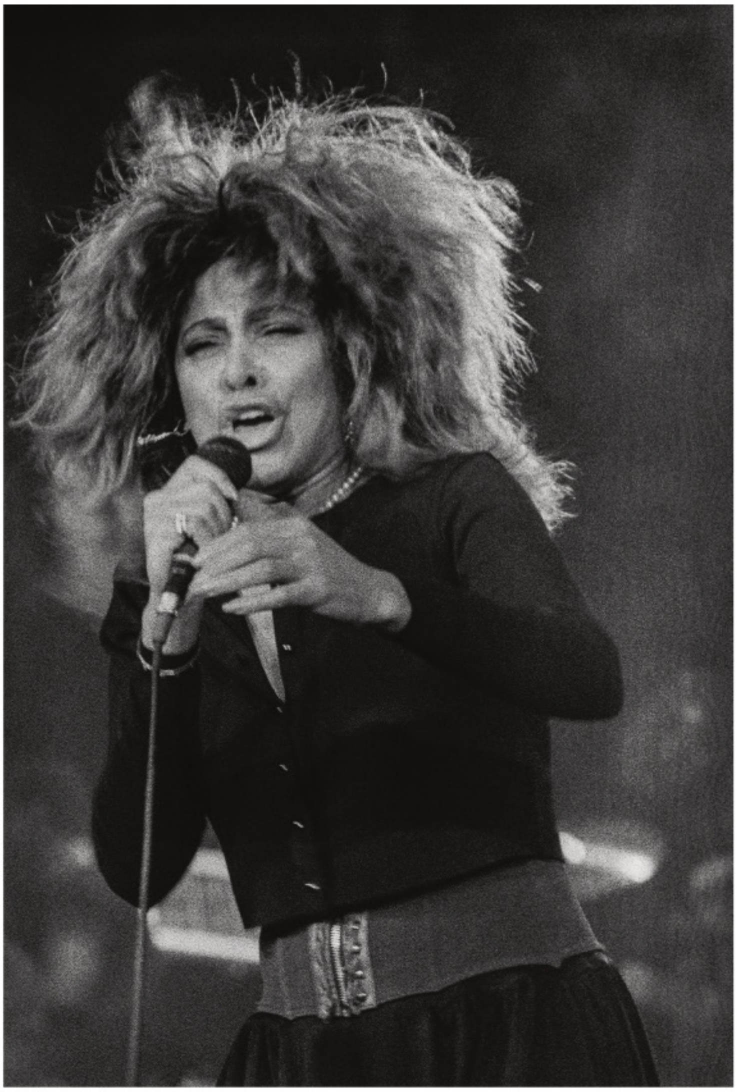

'Have the intervening years been a waste of my time? Perhaps I should have packed it all in at 18'

Photographer and journalist Damien Demolder has worked in the photographic publishing industry since 1997 and is the former editor of *Amateur Photographer.* He writes regularly about photography for a number of leading publications and has also been a judge on a number of prestigious international photo competitions. See his website at **www.damiendemolder.com**.

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